

JUNG WOONG KIM

THIRD WORLD MISSION-CHURCH

PARTNERSHIP:

A KOREAN-THAI MODEL

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**THIRD WORLD MISSION-CHURCH RELATIONSHIP:
A KOREAN-THAI MODEL**

by

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Mekong delineates much of the eastern border.

The Central Lowland Plain, the basin of the Chao Phraya River, is the political and economic heart of the nation. Although it contains less than 25 percent of the country's total area, over 40 percent of the population lives in this plain. Furthermore, from these heavily populated and intensively cultivated fields comes one of the world's largest rice crops. Metropolitan Bangkok--the focal point of trade, transport, and industrial activity--is situated on the southern edge of the region at the head of the Gulf of Thailand. It is Thailand's largest urban area and is the heart of the country.

The Southern Peninsula is distinctive in climate, terrain, and resources. Rubber plantations, coconut growing and tin mining by a largely Muslim population distinguish the region economically, ethnically, and politically from the northern half of the country. A narrow sliver of rugged mountains and impenetrable tropical forest led to an early isolation and separate political development from the rest of the country.

Thailand is thus not a homogeneous geographic entity but has different terrain features in different regions. But despite such differentiation, the Central region is a powerful unifying force in preserving Thailand as a national unit. The influence of the monarchy and centralized administration and transportation make unity in regional diversity. This unity even in diversity is also found in

Relations with Foreign Powers

The history of Thai relations with foreign countries both illustrates and helps explain several aspects of Thai culture. KIM missionaries need to take these attitudes into account as they develop their relations with the Thai church.

INSOR summarizes Thailand's early relations with Europe as follows:

Contacts with Europe started with Portuguese, early in the sixteenth century, and Dutch, English and French traders a century later. Towards the end of that century the British East India Company was well established in India, the Dutch in Indonesia, and the French, also in India, sought further expansion in Siam.¹¹

Warshaw continues:

During the seventeenth century France tried to dominate Siam through a Greek adventurer named Constantine Phaulkon, who was in their pay. Phaulkon became a friend of the Siamese king and would have given the French the access they wanted to one of the richest courts in Asia, but Thai nobles executed him. Then they closed Siam to the West, beginning a policy that lasted 135 years.¹²

During this period of isolation from the West, Siam began to trade more with China and fought a series of wars with the Burmese and other adjacent kingdoms.¹³ The Ayutthaya era relations with China continued in the form of

¹¹D. Insor, Thailand: A Political, Social, and Economic Analysis (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 117.

¹²Steven Warshaw, Southeast Asia Emerges (San Francisco: Diablo Press/Canfield Press, 1975), p. 64.

¹³*Ibid.*

tribute missions to the Chinese throne once every five to ten years and the number of Chinese living and working in Thailand grew.¹⁴

When contact with the West resumed, the Siamese court in Ayutthaya played off one European power against another in order to maintain their independence.¹⁵ "This policy of playing one Western power against another was a principal source of Siam's diplomatic strength."¹⁶ For example, in the nineteenth century, after the British were settled into the Malay Peninsula, the Siamese offered to work with them by granting them trading privileges. Siam carefully avoided domination by the British, however, by granting the same trading privileges to the United States in 1833.

During the twentieth century, in harmony with anti-French and anti-Chinese sentiments, Phibul's government developed closer relations with Japan. Within months of the initial agreement with Japan, "Thailand was rewarded by the Japanese with the restoration of various territories that had at one time been under Bangkok's control: portions of Laos, Cambodia, the Burmese Shan states, and the four northernmost states of Malaya."¹⁷

¹⁴John W. Henderson, et al., Area Handbook of Thailand (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government, 1971), p. 29.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Warshaw, Southeast Asia, p. 64.

¹⁷Henderson, et. al., Area Handbook, p. 43.

Henderson continues:

Phibul declared war on the Allies in 1943, but his ambassador to the United States, Seni Pramoj, a civilian aristocrat and a man of less radical views than Pridi but firmly anti-Japanese, refused to deliver the declaration of war to the government of the United States. (The Thai ambassador's behavior, coupled with the work of Pridi's underground organization, which maintained contact after 1944 with the Southeast Asia Command at Kandy, Ceylon, led the United States not to deal with Thailand as an enemy country in the postwar peace negotiations.) . . . In July, 1944, Phibul's government fell and was replaced by the first predominantly civilian government since the 1932 coup.¹⁸

Another important aspect of Thai relations with foreign powers is rationalism. King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910-25) was the first Thai king to be educated abroad. He was also the first Thai nationalist and wrote on the subject of love of country. He organized a supplementary volunteer military group called Wild Tiger Corps. Its junior branch, the Tiger Cubs, was the forerunner of the Thai Boy Scout movement.¹⁹

The uneasy balance between the Pridi civilian and Phibul military factions in the government gradually deteriorated as more civil offices came under the control of military personnel. Yet as Warshaw points out:

Despite their antagonism, Phibul and Pridi were surprisingly effective together in government. Their common objective was to replace the foreigners in the government with Thais. In 1939 they revised the revenue code to place heavier taxes on the Chinese and Europeans who owned most of Siam's businesses. They also closed some Chinese schools and newspapers and rounded up and

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 43-44

¹⁹Ibid., p. 38.

deported some Chinese opium addicts.²⁰

The ministers were not the only ones in the government motivated by nationalism. "King Vajiravudh's own nationalism had in it an element of anti-Chinese sentiment that has continued to color some Thai nationalist attitude

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to modern days." The Thai became irritated by those Chinese residents that had not become assimilated into Thai culture and society. In documents published under a variety of pseudonyms, the king accused the Chinese of not assimilating themselves into the kingdom and of putting monetary interests ahead of loyalty to their adopted home.

These two aspects of Thai foreign relations paralleled Thai attitudes toward missionaries. In the Ayutthaya era King Narai the Great gave audience to Jesuit priests who unsuccessfully tried to convert him. This willingness to listen to outsiders without joining them is one of the most prominent characteristics of Thai culture, and has actually saved Thailand from Western imperialism. This characteristic, however, has made it difficult for both Roman Catholics and Protestants to be effective in evangelism.²³

Rama IV, known as King Mongkut (1851-68), had many

²⁰Warshaw, Southeast Asia, p. 66.

²¹Henderson, et al., Southeast Asia, p. 38.

²²Ibid., p. 39.

²³Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 6.

Western mentors and friends, especially among the missionaries. He thought it would be useful to adopt Western thought and technology without absorbing the accompanying religious doctrines. He said, "What you (Christians) teach us to do is admirable, but what you teach us to believe is foolish."²⁴ As the result of such attitudes, "The contributions of the missionaries to the intellectual development and public welfare of the Thai court and kingdom were many, although their converts were few." Under Phibul's government, "aspersions were cast in government circles on Thais who had become Christians. The clear inference of many government statements of the period was that only Buddhists could be true Thai patriots."²⁶

Summary

The Thais try to keep their unity in the midst of geographical and ethnic diversity. The country retained its independence through strong nationalism, playing one foreign power against another, the monarchy, and Theravada Buddhism. Missionaries must understand these aspects of the culture in order to develop good relationships with Thai nationals.

²⁴Henderson, et al., Area Handbook, p. 34.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 43.

Political Factors

Thais have very little interest in political matters. This is particularly true for the peasants, who make up 81 percent of the population. In recent years, however, modern education and the side-effects of mass-communication certainly have combined to accelerate the people's political interest and involvement.²⁷

To develop right relationships with Thais it is necessary to understand their general attitudes toward leaders and the central government, and their policy of neutrality.

Attitude Toward Leaders

Although Thais have an intense love of freedom and individuality, they respect their leaders. "Traditionally, the Thai people have respected the upper social class and its authority and it is taboo to criticize one's superior's ideas and those of the higher officials."²⁸

Thais are accustomed to strong central and paternalistic rule. As Thanat Khoman, the former Foreign Minister, has said: "If we look back at our national history, we can very well see that this country works better and prospers under an authority, not a tyrannical authority, but a unifying authority around which all elements of the

²⁷ Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 26.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

nation can rally."²⁹

The Thais also retain their traditional reverence for their 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). They are proud that their rulers have been able to maintain their country's independence despite repeated attempts by foreign powers to dominate it.

One example of the Thai's obedience and their extraordinary respect for authority is the practice of ceremonial prostrations:

When one goes to see a superior, as soon as he is in sight one must prostrate oneself and worship him, raising one's joined hands above the head, the body bent forward; and one speaks seated, legs behind . . . Speaking to princes one must say: "I, dust of your august feet, prince who protects my head, I who am the plant under your feet . . ." (And to the King) "I, who am a grain of dust under your sacred feet, I receive your orders, divine lord."³⁰

The Monarchy as the Unifying Authority

The Thai monarchy symbolizes royal power, prerogatives and the tradition of kingship. But it is "more than that. It is an ingrained characteristic of the Thai people; they are royalists. To envision Thailand as a sovereign state without the institution of the monarchy is unthinkable."³¹

²⁹ Insor Thailand, p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

³¹ Thailand Official Yearbook, pp. 35-36.

The history of the Thai throne goes back to the Kingdom of Sukhothai, founded in A.D. 1238. The Thai monarchy has been the crucial factor which has maintained the country's independence from aggressive foreign powers, particularly from Western colonial domination, ever since.

The omnipresent fact of Siamese history has been the absolutism of the king, an absolutism which in theory and practice meant that his caprice made and voided the fortunes of those who surrounded him. His power of punishment and of death extended to the princes of the royal blood and to his ministers.³²

Bunge analyzed the Thai view of kingship as combining the following elements: Father of the people (pho-khun); the wheel-rolling king (chakraphat); the lord of the land (phra chao phaen din); and the divine king (devaraja).³³

Concerning the concept of the king as father, Prince Damrong has said:

As for the Thai method of Government, it represents the King as if he were the father of all the people. The method of government takes the form of government of the family as its ideal. . . . Thus, it can be seen that the Thai method of government was like the father ruling his children. . . . Such as is used as a principle of government in Siam today.³⁴

³²Ruth Benedict, Thai Culture and Behaviour (New York: Cornell University Press, 1943), p. 4.

³³Bunge, Thailand, p. 14.

³⁴David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand, quoted in Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 29.

The second part of the concept of kingship is described by the Thai word chakraphat. The word is difficult to translate effectively into English. Literally, it means "wheel rolling king." The term is associated with Pali Dhammasottha, the ancient Hindu-Buddhist law code. According to this concept, an ideal monarch obtains universal power by being a king of righteousness, universally acclaimed by the people.³⁵ He should adhere rigidly to the ten kingly virtues: alms-giving, morality, liberality, straight-forwardness, gentleness, self-restraint, peacefulness, non-violence, forbearance, and rectitude.³⁶

The king as phra chao phaen din was lord of the land. This designation is meant to distinguish the appearance and behavior of the monarch from the point of view of his subjects. In this sense, the Thai throne displayed the qualities of splendor and majesty. The king stood to his subjects as the symbol of the nation and as the protector of the nation.³⁷

According to the conception of devaraja, the king was an earthly incarnation of the Hindu god Shiva. He became the object of a politico-religious cult officiated

³⁵Harold E. Smith, Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Thailand (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976), p. 83.

³⁶Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 30.

³⁷Harold E. Smith, Dictionary, p. 83.

over by a corps of royal Brahmans who were part of the retinue of the Buddhist court. (In a Buddhist context, the rtpyaraja was a bodhissattva--a Buddha-to-be³⁸) As Smith describes it:

. . . Such a cult included a structure of cosmological symbols which transformed the kingdom into the universe and the king into the lord of the universe. It is not known to what extent the cult of the devaraja was a major part of the theory of Thai kingship at any specific time. It is important to remember that in the Thai cosmology, there is not a sharp dividing line between the natural and the supernatural realms. Hence, there is an inherent ambivalence on the question of whether or not the king was divine, or earthly, or both.³⁹

Since 1932 the king has been separated from the day-to-day affairs of the state. His duties are officially more ceremonial than substantive. However, as Bunge observes,

. . . By convention he is a Buddhist, "upholder of religions," and head of the armed forces. In addition, being indisputably the most prestigious and respected figure in the country, the king's constitutional power of consent and appointment, symbolic as it may be, is the ultimate source of legitimization to a given political leadership and is sought actively by partisan leaders.⁴⁰

The king, Bhumibol Adulyadej Rama IX (1946-), is "above partisan strife and is widely respected as the living symbol of national unity and of the historical continuity of

³⁸ Bunge, Thailand, p. 14.

³⁹ Harold E. Smith, Dictionary, p. 83.

⁴⁰ Bunge, Thailand, p. 178.

the Thai as a sovereign, independent people."⁴¹ Probably, the most significant contribution of the king to Thai culture, and also the most difficult to assess, is what could be called "royal influence."⁴² In the early 1960's prime Minister Sarit revived the motto "Nation-Religion-King" as a fighting political slogan for his regime. He wanted

. . . to restore the King, a retiring man, to active participation in national life, and urged Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit, his consort, to have more contact with the Thai public, which had a natural affection for the monarchy. Royal tours were also scheduled on which the king and queen represented Thailand abroad.⁴³

The king appointed the Senate from a list submitted by parliamentary leaders after the new constitution for a bicameral legislature went into effect in October, 1974.

. . . The government also was to be named by the king on the advice of parliamentary leaders and would be responsible to the House of Representatives. In the event that the lower house could not agree on selection of a government, the king was empowered to dissolve parliament and name an interim government to act until new elections could be held.⁴⁴

As the main unifying authority, the king deals with crises between the government and the people. For example, on October 13, 1973, more than 250,000 people rallied in Bangkok before the Democracy Memorial to press their demands

⁴¹Ibid., p. 173.

⁴²Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 32.

⁴³Bunge, Thailand, p. 36.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 42.

for a more democratic constitution and authentic parliamentary elections. The next day, 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 in order to prevent further bloodshed, and called Thanom and his cabinet to Chitralada Palace for talks. In the evening, the king went on television and radio to announce a compromise solution. Many of the students' demands, including a new constitution, 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.⁴⁵

Since 1238, the Thai monarchy has been characterized by absolutism, with the king seen as the father of the people, the wheel-rolling king, the lord of the land, and the divine king. Although the Thai political system is a constitutional monarchy, the king still provides a stabilizing influence and a strong unifying authority in the country.

The Central Government

On June 24, 1932, members of a small, recently developed, Western-educated group staged a successful coup d'etat. This coup transformed the country from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Power shifted for a

⁴⁵Bunge, Thailand, p. 41.

time from the throne to a cabinet composed of Western-educated leaders of various factions in the armed and civil services.⁴⁶ The coup d'état of 1932 became the model for change. Alex Smith describes the situation as follows:

Over the succeeding forty-one years, twenty-seven coups and counter coups were launched. Most were bloodless and militaristic in character. Some failed (Mole, 1973:70). Martial law was common, but not oppressive. Respites of democratically elected representations in each of the ten national elections were short lived. Military strongmen usually regained power through swift bloodless coups. Despite such power struggles, the kingdom remained reasonably stable. The mediatory voice of the monarch was often the unifying factor.⁴⁷

Although many coups were launched, they were merely changes of leadership at the top; they had little effect on the rest of the country. As D. Insor said:

There was no progress from nationalism to national participation and hence no real democracy. Ironically, Thailand did improvise her own "colonial" system--a half-nominated, half-elected legislature--but failed to develop from there.⁴⁸

Beside the monarchy, the military is very influential in Thai government. Insor pointed out four problems which democracy in Asia faces: "the disinterest of the peasantry; the power of the military; the existence of corruption; and the danger of subversion."⁴⁹ The military leaders of the first coup group, disapproving of the

⁴⁶ Henderson, et al., Area Handbook, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Alex G. Smith, Strategy to Multiply Rural Churches (Bangkok: O.M.F. Publishers, 1977), p. 69.

⁴⁸ Insor, Thailand, p. 178.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

policies of Pridi, the most influential civilian promoter, and the methods of Manopakorn, the conservative civilian prime minister, seized power by staging a coup d'état on June 20, 1933, less than a year after the first coup.⁵⁰ Traditionally, the military leaders have taken over where democracy has failed. All political leaders have professed a belief in democracy since 1932, but there have been only two short-lived civilian regimes (1944-47, 1975-76). This demonstrates that the indispensable ingredient for political leadership in Thailand is the support of the military forces. Since 1979, the government has remained in military hands.⁵¹

Neutrality

"The traditional foreign policy of Siam," says Sir Josiah Crosby, "has been one of studied neutrality." She maintained a "nice balance" between the great powers. Thai statesmen were past masters in playing off two countries against one another.⁵²

During World War II, Thailand under Phibun sided with the Japanese; Siam under Pridi sided with the Allies. General Phao explained to the provincial governors (in case of Japanese invasion):

The governor should apparently co-operate with the enemy during the day but set up an underground movement to fight the enemy especially during the night. In this way he would prevent the enemy from oppressing the

⁵⁰Henderson, et al., Area Handbook, p. 41.

⁵¹Shin, "Church Planting," p. 283.

⁵²Insor, Thailand, p. 125.

people.⁵³

After the war, Phibun allowed the public to express opinions against his regime. The Phibun regime stood by its alliance with the West. But the New York Times accused Thai newspapers owned or influenced by leaders of the country of including articles "against the interests of the Free World" --and particularly of the United States. The government replied that "Publication of opinions by various newspapers is a right and freedom of the press with which the Government is not in a position to interfere."⁵⁴

Under Phibul's anti-Communist influence, Thailand refused to recognize Communist China, supported the United Nations against North Korea in 1950, and became the most loyal supporter of the United States in mainland Southeast Asia. But shortly before the elections, Phibul pledged himself to consider three trade union requests. They were:

. . . Firstly that Thailand should be a free country, and not tied to a foreign country's policy. Secondly, that there should be free trade with all countries in the world, and the use of Thailand as a military base by foreign countries should be banned. Thirdly, that the **Anti-Communist Act** should be repealed, since laborers were afraid of it being used to block the labor movement.⁵⁵

Phibul did not act quickly enough to meet these "requests," however, and demonstrations soon followed: "Thailand is not an American colony," proclaimed May Day

⁵³ Ibid., p. 126.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 126-27.

banners. 'Wipe out wicked imperialist culture;' 'Abrogate the Anti-Communist Act;' 'Adopt neutralist policy, Quit SEATO;' 'We condemn Capitalist Association;' and so on."⁵⁶

In June, 1957, Phibul asserted that he would follow a policy of neutrality if the public favored it: "who dares go against public opinion?"⁵⁷ Later, after forcing Phibul to leave the country, Marshal Sarit, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, commented: "I feel we should have an independent foreign policy, following in the footsteps of none."⁵⁸

With the changed geo-political picture in Southeast Asia, Thailand realized that she could not be reconciled with her communist neighbors as long as United States military personnel were stationed in the country. In March, 1975, the 27,000 United States military personnel began to withdraw from Thailand; the pull-out was completed in March, 1976. The focus of Thai relations with the United States clearly shifted from military cooperation to economic and

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technical cooperation.

Official circles in Thailand, disappointed over American aid allotments for 1976, declared in the Bangkok Post (January, 1976):

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 127.

⁵⁷ Ibid..

⁵⁸ Ibid..

⁵⁹ Bunge, Thailand, p. 43.

Thailand with its 24 million population is getting 23 million U.S. dollars while it is reported that Cambodia with four to five million population is getting 20 million dollars and Laos with two to three million population is getting 120 million dollars. . . . Does the United States value so little Thailand's firm stand with the Free World?⁶⁰

Because Thailand felt the United States was not providing her with enough aid, the Prime Minister suddenly started negotiations for "economic cooperation" with the Soviet Union.⁶¹ Since 1975 Thailand has been seeking a more independent, neutral position because of the regional influence exerted by Communist China and North Vietnam. Although the government itself rejects communism, it also strives to avoid dangerous challenges to its communist neighbors. In short, ". . . the Thais today are perpetuating the flexible foreign policy that enabled them to maintain their independence throughout history."⁶² Bunge summarized Thailand's current foreign policy as follows:

Through early 1980 the Thai government continued its open-door policy, stressing the importance of political dialogue and functional cooperation with all nations regardless of political differences. This effort was marked by three salient patterns. The first was the Thai policy of balanced approach to all three major powers--the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. The second was Bangkok's growing emphasis on ASEAN solidarity vis-a-vis Indochinese neighbors while at the same time seeking to promote friendly ties with the latter. The third pattern was the emphasis

⁶⁰ Insor, Thailand, p. 128.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 129.

⁶² Warshaw, Southeast Asia, p. 145.

Bangkok placed on the security-related United States connection. The emphasis could be attributed to the Thai fear of regional instability that contained the seeds of a potential superpower confrontation.⁶³

The king's strong leadership and the people's respect for authority are unifying factors in Thailand. The central government is very unstable and changeable by royal influence and military power. Historically, the country has maintained neutrality in its foreign policy. Thais try to maintain a balance between the interests of various strong foreign powers, and thus seek to keep their freedom and security. These political aspects of Thai culture all influence how missionaries should interact with the national church as will be discussed below.

Social-Economic Factors

There are three main aspects to the socio-economic life of Thailand: the family tie structure in the family, village, and nation; the social structure of royal class and the non-inherited classes, especially in patron-client relationships; and the Thai views of nature.

Family Tie Structure

The family is the basic unit in the village. The nuclear family is the ideal and most common form of family life. Extended families and even entire villages cooperate for such activities as the ceremonial observance of traditional events in the life-cycle or for planting and

⁶³

Bunge, Thailand, p. 210.

harvesting rice or house-building, but such arrangements are temporary. Two or more nuclear families related through the female line may alternatively live together, either in the same building or in different structures in the

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household compound.

In the North and Northeast, the tendency for couples to live with or next to the wife's parents is more common than in the Central region. "In one Central Thai village studied in the 1950s it was common for the newly married couple to spend one or more years with the wife's family before settling permanently near the bridegroom's family.⁶⁴ The domestic behavior of Thailand is "conceptually mother-centered, but in reality father-influential, while matrilocal marriage is looked forward to."⁶⁷

Thai parents teach their children to give their parents love (rak), gratitude (kadanyuu), respect (khawrop), and obedience (chuafang). Moore said of this parental discipline:

. . . popular sayings, such as "If you love your cattle, tie them with a rope; if you love your children, beat them," as well as field observation, show that Thai parents--as parents of small children everywhere--do slap or spank their children when they are especially unruly or disobedient. Generally though, the respect relationship between Thai parents and children is such

⁶⁴Shin, "Church Planting," p. 312.

⁶⁵Henderson, Area Handbook, p. 67.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁶⁷Shin, "Church Planting," p. 304.

that scolding is usually sufficient to secure compliance with requests.⁶⁸

Family ties form a model which is extended to the village and the whole Thai people. They identify Thai blood by calling each other phi (older brother or sister) and nong (younger brother or sister). This shows the strong sense of solidarity within the country, that all Thais are of one blood.

Social Structure

The distinction between superior and inferior is the cornerstone of Thai social order. Lucien Hanks describes this as follows:

Each Thai regards every other person in (the social order as higher or lower than himself. The elder, more literate, richer persons tend to be higher due to greater virtue or "merit," as the Buddhist bun is usually translated. Based on these differences in social standing, a hierarchy arises where each person pays deference to all who stand above and is deferred to by all below.⁶⁹

The Sakdinaa ranking system was the most important nation-wide social order until the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Under this system, the King was at the head of the kingdom and the senior courtiers were directly below him. Below these courtiers were officials serving in various capacities in the capital and in the provinces.

⁶⁸ Frank John Moore, Thailand, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture, quoted in Shin, "Church Planting," p. 305.

⁶⁹ Lucien M. Hanks, "The Thai Social Order as Entourage and Circle," quoted in Shin, "Church Planting," p. 284.

Among the titles of the royal appointees were, in descending order, Chao Praya, Phya, Phra, and Iuang. And there was a host of civil servants who were appointed by more important government officials. Furthermore, this system encompassed not only social class but also economic status as well.

The reason is because the system allowed the king to own all the land, the major economic resources, and make grants of riceland to nobles, officials, and civil servants according to the sakdinaa grades. Officials of the highest grade were granted 10,000 rai (4,000 acres), while most junior appointees of the king received 400 rai (160 acres) and the lowest ranking commoners only 25 rai (10 acres). The main purpose of this rank-land system was to compensate for the otherwise unpaid government service and to provide labor for the military services and public works. Even after the system was discarded by King Chulalongkorn and was replaced by a civil service law in 1928, the prevailing concept of the kingdom as a functionally graded society has remained, in which a person's social status was determined by his present occupation and by other noninherited personal attributes.⁷⁰

A great change in the social structure occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. The reorganization of the government and the large-scale public works projects led to a great expansion of the bureaucracy. The number of government employees in the 1880s was approximately 12,000, but by the 1920s there were some 80,000. The increase in jobs gave new opportunities to the children of ordinary farmers who had received some schooling from the Buddhist monks.⁷¹ The coup of 1932 that brought military and bureaucratic elites into power both reflected

⁷⁰Shin, "Church Planting," p. 285.

⁷¹Henderson, Area Handbook, p. 57.

and contributed to changes in local social patterns. The rapid growth of population and the shortage of land were also important factors for changing the old social order.⁷² By the 1960s, a self-perpetuating class of officials existed with access to special educational opportunities at universities overseas and at Thailand's select military academies. Henderson describes:

Thai society has not in the past had self-perpetuating social groups or inherited ranks. With the exception of the very small group with royal titles (whose ranks and titles diminished with each generation of distance from the king), social status has always been determined primarily by nonhereditary factors, such as function, behavior, wealth, and age.⁷³

Bureaucratic and military expansion and the movement of Thais into the rapidly growing private sector provided opportunities for social mobility. Education was necessary for advancement, but military expertise as such seems not to have been an important consideration. The sangha (i.e., the Buddhist hierarchy) offered a special avenue of social mobility to some of the sons of the peasants at the base of Thailand's socio-economic pyramid. More important, families with a base already established in the upper or middle reaches of the socio-economic system were able to give their children a better start in a system whose growth rate was slowing by the mid-1970s.⁷⁴

⁷² Bunge, Thailand, p. 80.

⁷³ Henderson, Area Handbook, p. 54.

⁷⁴ Bunge, Thailand, pp. 90-92.

In this social order Thais, in attempting to keep things in good order (pen rabiab) look both to those above them and to those below:

. . . what has historically been important to the Thais have not been Western notions of productivity, efficiency, and coordination but rather protocol, deference to rank, respect for authority, and smooth interpersonal relationships. In stressing order over organization, pen rabiab over "well-organized," the Thai system maximizes the values which society has long considered most important.⁷⁵

Thai parents and teachers instruct their children how to function in the Thai hierarchy. One is taught to be obedient, polite, and subdued, not challenging, frank, or aggressive. For it is in showing respect to authority, not challenging it, in speaking softly, not forcefully, that one meshes smoothly into the social fabric. There is room for upward mobility and one can work hard to better his position --but not in an assertive, aggressive fashion.⁷⁶

The Thai language itself, and particularly the pronoun system, reflects the complex hierarchical structure of Thai society. This system, which one linguist needed 64 pages to describe,⁷⁷ enables Thais to show the proper amount of respect, deference and intimacy with each other. One example is the first person singular pronoun:

⁷⁵John Paul Frieg, InterAct: Guidelines for Thais and North Americans (Chicago: Intercultural Press, 1980), p. 54.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 14.

. . . the most common current form for "I" (phom) that a man would use (women have another distinct set of pronouns) is also the word for "hair of the head." Correspondingly, some of the extremely deferential forms for "you" translate literally as "underneath the foot," "underneath the sole of the royal foot," and "underneath the sole and dust of the royal foot."⁷⁸

At the apex of the Thai social order is the royal family, followed by the hereditary nobility, the top-ruling class, general military officers, political and public bureaucrats, professional groups, and the lower class. Although the sakdinaa system is no longer in official use, the social order is still very important as illustrated by the pronoun system described above. These hierarchical relations are in the Thai heart. In virtually every social situation, Thais distinguish between superior and inferior, following the traditional patron-client structure.

Patron-Client Structure

In the interaction of any two Thais, there is a consciousness of relative rank based on differences in age and sex, clerical or lay status, or patron-client relationships. These ranks, however, govern the relations of specific individuals rather than entire classes.⁷⁹

Anthropologist Michael Moerman has summarized the basic Thai hierarchical pattern this way:

Younger-elder, child-parent, layman-priest, peasant-official--bonds between inferior and superior compose the family, the village, and the nation. In return for

⁷⁸ Ibid..

⁷⁹ Bunge, Thailand, p. 84.

the service and respect of his subordinate, the superior gives protection and leadership. In none of these relationships is there any provision for the inferior to challenge the wisdom of his superior, to express ideas of which his superior might disapprove, to provide direction to his superior's actions.⁸⁰

Bunge agrees with this assessment: "Most observers agree that the patron-client relationship is pervasive in Thai society, not only at the village level but from the highest levels of military and bureaucratic oligarchy on down."⁸¹

Traditionally, those of a low status have never viewed such a social system as particularly unreasonable or severe. Rather, they have tended to feel that those who have status and authority derive them to a certain extent from their moral and ethical excellence. Thais hold to the Buddhist notion that accumulation of merit and demerit from a previous life determines one's social position in this life.⁸²

Historically, the nobles were clients of the king; they rendered service to him in return for his protection and rewards. The nobles in turn had similar symbiotic relationships with their clients, and so on down the line. The key factor for evaluating someone's status was his control of manpower, the number of clients that he

⁸⁰ Michael Moerman, Western Culture and the Thai Way of Life, quoted in Frieg, InterAct, p. 14.

⁸¹ Bunge, Thailand, p. 86.

⁸² Frieg, InterAct, pp. 13-14.

possessed. For example, the high status of the king is brought out by the Thai word for "government official" (khaarachakan), which literally means "servant of the
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king." This term makes explicit the concept that all who work in the government are clients of the king, thus making him the all-powerful ruler.

The over-all societal emphasis on vertical respect relations and submission to authority shows itself again in the area of organizational structure:

The subordinate is above all else concerned with complying with the wishes and orders of his superior, who is in turn "looking up" to his supervisor, and so on. Bold initiative is generally out of place, for it may tangle the delicately-linked chain connecting one slot in the hierarchy to the next.⁸⁴

The result of this approach is that there is an orderly chain-of-command in society, and thus all members of the hierarchy benefit from the smooth operation of the system:

. . . The depth of the client-patron relationships varies with the degree of mutual affection and trust. Benefits flow both ways since the patron can also call on the client to provide him with certain services, and, in Buddhist terms, the help rendered to the client affords the patron the opportunity to make merit (and thusly increase his chance of a higher position in his next life).⁸⁵

Generally, a patron-client relationship lasts only as long as both parties gain something from it, and it may

⁸³ Ibid., p. 25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

be broken at the option of either. The patron is therefore motivated to provide benefits (e.g., protection, political support, or economic transactions) to those dependent on him.

Thai View of Nature

Thailand's weather is warm all through the year and the land and water teem with a wide variety of plant and animal life. The central plain is particularly fertile flatland perfect for rice cultivation. King Ram Kamhaeng said in a stone inscription in 1283:

The land of Thai is good. In the waters are fish; in the fields is rice. . . . Coconut groves abound in this land. Jackfruit abounds in this land. Mango trees abound in this land. . . . Whoever wants to play, plays. Whoever wants to laugh, laughs. Whoever wants to sing, sings. ⁸⁶

Thais believe that man is the product of nature and a part of nature. Man simply must obey the rules of nature. Therefore, man is in a passive position and should not confront nature, because nature is absolute. Thais assume that the flow of time is cyclical. The country is almost free of volcanic eruption, avalanches, hurricanes, earthquakes, tidal waves, extreme cold, and drought. Thais saw no need to struggle with their environment and their religious beliefs gave them no rationale for doing so. They have tended to treat such natural disasters as floods and crop failures simply as matters beyond their control, as

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

normal, if regrettable, aspects of recurrent natural cycles.

Thailand's rice economy is based on a few months of hard work--planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing--and the rest of the year is largely free. There are few needs in a warm, gentle climate; there is enough to eat and to spare. Rest, relaxation and leisure are thus the rule for most of the year. Insor said:

. . . In such an environment there is little demand for "enterprise"--or indeed for communism--which in any case is provided by foreigners or overseas Chinese. Thais themselves prefer to work on the land or in Government offices. They share the traditional Asian contempt for merchants. (In feudal society, priest, warrior and farmer ranked before the artisan, and the merchant came last of all.⁸⁷

This attitude toward merchants works itself out in normal business relationships. Thai farmers sell rice to Chinese middle-men, who in turn sell the rice to international markets at two or three times the price they bought it for. As Kim observed, "The Thai peasants' pocket is always empty and they are poor, but they never starve. They eat their own rice and they fish at any creek or pond for their proteins."⁸⁸ Many Thai peasants are satisfied in their traditional way of life. They are not serious about the present life, but rather are concerned about their next incarnation.

The changing economic situation in the twentieth century has had its effect on Thai politicians since "economic

⁸⁷ Insor, Thailand, p. 176.

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Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 34.

progress creates a stronger middle class simply by producing large numbers of trained personnel (managers, technicians, skilled workers).⁸⁹ Their influence expands as development itself assumes growing national significance.

KIM must be very careful to keep these socio-economic conditions in mind as it develops its relationships with the Thai church. This includes building family ties with the nationals as well as their Thai counterparts and their followers. The mission must think seriously about its approach to Thai social structure and their patron-client relations to open the door for preaching the Gospel to the peasants, the majority of the population. It is also very important to find the proper organizing system to enable KIM to work effectively in Thai society.

Psychological Factors

Good relationships between Thais are based on the Buddhist philosophy of tranquility and Thai psychological characteristics, such as "social cosmetic," mai pen rai, saduak sabai, Thai, chaow nai, and chuai kan.

Social Cosmetic

The Thai people are dominated by Buddhist philosophy, which discourages external expressions of inward feelings. Buddhism encourages self-control that maintains coolness regardless of circumstances. Therefore, even

⁸⁹ Insor, Thailand, p. 177.

though outwardly a Thai may be extremely polite and generous, inwardly he or she may be feeling the opposite. Phillips describes this double-minded characteristic as "social cosmetic."⁹⁰ Thais only say things that accord with their hearers expectations even if it is against their own intentions. To avoid stress in social relationships, *riaproai*, literally meaning "neat," is taught from childhood as a social value in one's appearance and behavior. Alex Smith comments concerning this characteristic of the Thai:

The Buddhistic philosophy of tranquility teaches them to repress feelings, not expose them. Friendliness and courtesy that foreigners quickly notice is a reflection of this "social cosmetic." Face to face conflict is avoided, and feelings masked in diplomatic ways. One of the highest Thai virtues is the "cool heart" (cai yen), which remains calm in all circumstances.⁹¹

This characteristic makes it extremely difficult to determine the sincerity of a person's attitude.

Mai Pen Rai

Thais are known everywhere for their optimism and cheerfulness. The country is often called "the land of smiles," although recent social tensions may often cause the smiles to disappear. Most Thais seem to expect things to go well; if they do not, the Thais are inclined to say, "mai pen rai," which means, "never mind" or "it does not

⁹⁰ Hubert P. Phillips, Thai Peasant Personality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 66.

⁹¹ Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 75.

matter."⁹² This reflects the unconcerned freedom enjoyed by the Thai. Their "mai pen rai" attitude, to life's crises led Insor to comment, "Thais are masters of unconcern."⁹³ In most cases, Thais use mai pen rai when they want to "shrug off the little frustrations and disagree merits of life" and "prevent anger and passion from coming to the surface" in order to maintain peacefulness.⁹⁴ Thais try to sanuk always. Sanuk means enjoyment, fun, and pleasure, but it is more than these for the Thai. They integrate their life so that the time and energy one gives to an activity is rewarded immediately and directly with pleasure. Smith summarizes this attitude, "Life is a play and all the Thai are actors. Sanuk is a way of life, a release mechanism and practical philosophy balancing the social cosmetic."⁹⁵ But as a result of these related attitudes toward life, most Thais are not seriously concerned about their religious life and about their relationships with foreigners.

Saduak Sabai

Like all people, Thais seek personal convenience and comfort with a free abandonment. Saduak (convenience) and sabai (ease, comfort, satisfaction) seem to be the outcome

⁹²Warshaw, Southeast Asia, p. 126.

⁹³Insor, Thailand, p. 112.

⁹⁴Moore, Thailand, quoted in Shin, "Church Planting," p. 301.

⁹⁵Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 76.

of the "sanuk" philosophy of life. This is reflected in their attitudes and way of life to such a degree that outsiders regard them as one of the most "easy going" people in Asia. Some falsely interpret this as laziness, but the majority of Thais are far from lazy. Smith stated, "The 'Saduak-Sabai' concept reaches beyond concern for oneself in the genuine concern for the well being of others"⁹⁶

Thai

"Thai" means free. Pride in this freedom dominates Thai life. Its main expression is in the individualism with which the "loosely social structured society" is built. The freedom of individuals is tempered by their relation to all others in "phi nong" (brothers and sisters) superior-subordinate relationships. This gives rise to the kreng cai attitude, a respectful fear and deference especially for superiors in age position, status, or birth. It expresses that polite concern against encroaching on a superior individual's freedom. Mole describes this trait as follows: "The operation of this concept is so strong that middlemen are used to negotiate between socially distanced individuals or different strata."⁹⁷ Thai people cannot express their inner thoughts and ideas freely in front of dignitaries or the rich. This kreng cai attitude is a barrier to true

→ ⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Robert L. Mole, Thai Value and Behaviour Patterns (Tokyo: Charles Tuttle Co. Inc., 1973), p. 74.

dialogue and communication.

Chaov.-Nai

The Thai are still living under feudal influences. They call government officials "chaow-nai," meaning a person who is appointed by the king and who has power and authority. This chaow-nai concept is still very popular and is common practice among the Thai people (perhaps one of the most deeply-rooted social traditions in the Thai mentality). Kim stated the qualifications of chaow-nai as follows:

1. The person must be generous, not stingy
2. The person must be a faithful Buddhist and be merciful
3. The person must know how to respect elders
4. The person must know how to appreciate others
5. The person must be religiously learned, having been trained in the temple
6. The person must be erudite, etc.⁹⁸

The barrier between the privileged class and the commoners is still an unbreakable wall. This kind of feudalistic relationship pervades every corner of Thai society, including the Christian church.

Chuai Kan

Chuai kan, "helping one another" or "cooperation" is another key phrase in Thai social relationships. To some extent, chuai kan is a Buddhist virtue based on metta (universal love), karunaa (compassion), and Muthitaa (sympathetic joy).⁹⁹ But there is also a psychological

⁹⁸ Kim, Unfinished Mission, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁹ Shin, "Church Planting," p. 302.

component behind the spirit of chuai kan. It helps Thais cope with impersonal fearfulness in connection with survival, agricultural failures, etc.

One of the major causes for the slow growth of the Thai church and for the difficulties of building true relationships is these psychological characteristics of the Thai people. Their optimistic outlook on life, communication problems stemming from the riaproai and mai pen rai attitudes, the syncretistic tendencies, and the general lack of a serious attitude toward relationships which have been built up in this tropical land of tranquility are major obstacles to evangelism and missionary effectiveness.

Religio-cultural factors

Religion affects and permeates every element of Thai culture and social structure. Since religion is "the keystone of Thai culture"¹⁰⁰ it cannot be separated from the culture.

The external Thai religion is known as Theravada Buddhism, but internally or practically speaking, the popular Thai religion is syncretic, containing elements of animism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, and human rationalism. All kinds of religious and superstitious

¹⁰⁰ Mole, Thai Value, p. 58.

elements are harmoniously integrated in the syncretistic nature of the Thai society. Kim describes their religious attitude:

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. They think the more religions you mix together, the more effective your salvation.¹⁰¹

This makes syncretistic tendency equally difficult to find pure Buddhism or real Christianity in Thailand.

Animistic relics

The original base structure of Thai religion includes belief in spirits and the supernatural. "Animism predates Buddhism in Thailand and remains an important component of popular religion."¹⁰² In Thai peasant thought, that heterogenous category of phii have power of human beings.

Phii--spirits

The word phii is used for dead bodies, ghosts, spirits and manifestations of man (demons). There are many complicated categories of phii, but Smith classified them into four groups.¹⁰³ The first derives certainly from Thai animism; the other three may have been interposed from

¹⁰¹ Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 16.

¹⁰² Wendell Blanchard, et al., Thailand, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven: HRAP Press, 1957), P. 12.

¹⁰³ Alex Smith, Strategy, pp. 79-60.

Brahmanism. These four are:

Ghosts of the dead. The most feared phii, those of persons who met sudden or violent death or who died in childbirth. These phii remain to haunt and seek revenge.

The property spirits (phra phuum chao phii). Spirit houses perched on top of five foot poles are found everywhere across Thailand: on top of city buildings, in rural house compounds, even in Buddhist temple grounds. They are the guardians of the property.

Guardian spirits (chao pau). They are usually the spirits of prominent men of the past, such as the founder of a city or province or a pious monk renowned for his powers to do miracles and such like. These are usually worshipped at shrines.

Nature spirits. Spirits are believed to be in certain trees, rivers, mountains, caves, rocks, and other natural phenomena.

Phii may be either benevolent or malevolent. Sometimes Thais ask the phii for help, curses or protection. "The phii can scare or deceive [people], bother them, and possess them. Possession is either voluntary or involuntary."¹⁰⁴ Benedict confirms that "acts of prayers and propitiation in Thailand are made to the phii rather than in

¹⁰⁴ R. B. Textor, "An Inventory of Non Buddhist Supernatural Objects in a Central Thai Village," quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 79.

Buddhist worship."¹⁰⁵

phra khryang--supernatural objects

Textor categorized 118 non-Buddhist supernatural objects and beings after study of the central Thailand village Bang Chan in 1960. Many of these objects are infused with supernatural power by the magical manipulation of priests or of other people with much merit. Smith divides these objects into five categories:¹⁰⁶

Powerful sacred objects (Khong Khlang). These are usually "phra" images. "Phra is the honorific title of power used for the king, the Buddha, his images, the priests, and certain supernatural objects. "Khong Khlang" are generally strung on the body around the neck, waist, or wrists.

Sacred cloths. There are at least three types of cloth materials--holy string (daaisai sin), holy cloth (pha yan), and enchanted cloths (pha pluk sek)--which are magically manipulated in order to infuse special powers into them. Although these cloths are more in keeping with Brahmanistic practices, they are usually sacralized by Buddhist priests.

Tatoo (sak). Sacred tatooing is commonly done by a Buddhist priest, who transfers special power to the recipient by blowing on the tatoo spot.

¹⁰⁵Ruth Benedict, Thai Culture, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶Alex Smith, Strategy, pp. 81-84.

Sacred incantations. Two oral expressions of supernatural power are "khathaa" and "mantra." The khathaa are short Bali phrases recognized as sacred for invoking supernatural power by both villagers and special practitioners. Mantras are lengthier and usually used for curing by priests and sacred practitioners.

Holy water (nam mon). This is a common element used by priests and spirit practitioners in healing and exorcism.

Brahmanistic Influence

Indian Brahman ideas were introduced to the Thai by Khmer captives in Thailand during the Ayuthaya period. These ideas were gradually assimilated into Thai religion and politics. Smith listed six influences of Brahmanism:¹⁰⁷ New spirits (phii) like the tree ghosts, the property spirits and the nature spirits of mother earth, water, air, and fire were incorporated into the Thai religious system. A pantheon of supernatural beings were introduced to Thai peasants. The Thai compressed the whole pantheon of gods into one concept--"all things sacred" (sing sagsid thang laaj).

The soul-spirit concept of khwan, which provided a system for the life cycle rites. Since Buddhism had no appropriate ceremonies, the Brahman rites filled the gap.

Most Thai ceremonial rituals are of Brahman origin. In addition to rites of passage, there are three broad

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 84-87.

categories of ritual:

1. Festival rituals, such as the Thai new year (song khran) and the Loy Krathong festival focusing on the "Mother of Waters."

2. Fertility rituals. Kaufman describes "other animistic Brahmanistic rituals which take place between the two festivals completing the nature fertility cycle. . . ." ¹⁰⁸

3. House rituals. Before the owners live in the building, a house warming ritual must be performed. Priests encircle the house with "holy string" and chant. The following day, the priest return to bless the house by sprinkling holy water on it.

Astrological divination is another Brahman innovation. The Thai frequently visit the astrologer (mau dau or mau lek), asking his discernment as to whether they should move, embark on a new endeavor, etc. Other ritual practitioners. Blanchard summarizes succinctly:

Many shamans, spirit doctors, and other intermediaries between the world of man and the 'phii' still attempt to control the spirit powers by means of magical rites, charms, and spells. In some cases they become oracles through 'spirit possession' or function as sorcerers. Most commonly, however, they exorcise sick villagers of evil spirits. ¹⁰⁹

Even Thai Catholic priests practice many of these rituals, illustrating the depth of the problems of syncretism in

¹⁰⁸ Howard Keva Kaufman, Bangkok: A Community Study in Thailand, quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 85.

¹⁰⁹ Blanchard, Thailand, p. 103.

Thailand.

Theravada Buddhism

During the 11th Century in Northern Thailand the Theravada sect took root and was absorbed into the local animistic religion.¹¹⁰ Late in the 13th Century Theravada monks were sent from Ceylon to Nakhon Sri Thammarat in South Thailand. Theravada Buddhism spread north as King Ram Kham Haeng invited the monks to reside in Sukhothai, the capital, to spread their teachings. "The official espousal of this branch of Buddhism eventually unified Thailand under one modified animistic religion, coated with a strong Theravada Buddhism."¹¹¹

Kaufman describes these major factions in Thai

Buddhism:

1. The intellectual Buddhist emphasizing the philosophical aspect, trying to harmonize it with science. . . .
2. The liberal, educated Buddhist seeking to change Buddhism to conform to modern life, and
3. The rural peasant Buddhist practicing traditional Buddhism in its modified animistic form¹¹²

Some dominant factors among the peasant population of rural Thailand are:

¹¹⁰HRAF, Thailand (A monograph; New Haven: HRAF Press, 1956), p. 26.

¹¹¹Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 88.

¹¹²Kaufman, Banquad, quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 88.

Knowledge of Buddhism

The average Thai peasant has limited knowledge of philosophical Buddhism.

Merit-demerit (bun-baab)

The central concern of all Thai religious activity is the individual acquisition of merit. The aim is to store up as much merit (bun) and to reduce as much demerit (baab) as possible. Smith describes the main ways of acquiring merit:

1. Financing construction of new temples
2. Becoming a monk or novice
3. Donating for repairs on temples
4. Giving food daily to the monks
5. Attending temple on holy days and festivals
6. Keeping the five basic precepts (see below) all the time
7. Making pilgrimages to Buddhist shrines
8. Buying token gold leaf to stick on the Buddha's image at the temple
9. Having a son ordained as a monk
10. Giving alms¹¹³

There are hundreds of others.

The main causes for demerit are breaking these five precepts:

1. Do not destroy life (in any form)
2. Do not steal anything
3. Do not commit fornication
4. Do not lie or speak falsely
5. Do not partake of intoxicants (liquors or drugs)¹¹⁴

The five precepts (sin ha) are, however, highly ideal. They are usually neglected, but occasionally they

¹¹³Alex Smith, Strategy, pp. 89.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 89-90.

are all practiced for a day in order to build up merit.

Hell~Heaven (narok-sawan)

The Thai Buddhist hell is a purging process, and heaven is a stepping stone to another reincarnation in the struggle of the soul to attain nirvana enlightenment and extinction. Tambiah explains that "Following death the spirit essence or consciousness (winyan) will go first to hell, with many levels, to expiate his demerit before going on to enjoy his merit before rebirth."¹¹⁵

The temple (wat)

In 1970 there were 25,659 monasteries in Thailand.¹¹⁶ The temple is the focus for the social and religious functions of the community. A few decades ago the wat served not only as the center for worship, but also as school, town hall, local hotel, hospital, morgue, community chest, counselling agency, sports playground, and bank, among other things. Although a number of these functions are independent government agencies now, the temple still plays a dominant role in the life of the peasant.

¹¹⁵S. Tambiah, Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand, quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 90.

¹¹⁶National Statistical Office, "Statistical Summary of Thailand," quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 90.

the priesthood (sangkha)

Each wat is largely autonomous, though highly disciplined under the guidance of its abbot (chao wat). The 1970 statistics of the Department of Religious Affairs recorded 194,561 priests and 116,027 novices resident in Thai monasteries.¹¹⁷ Priests play a central role in the social and religious events of the village, having a higher status than anyone else. They are phra, a title of "high" power. They are looked upon as asexual--a kind of third sex. It is a social obligation for every young man to spend generally three months in the monastic life of the temple. This has become a rite of passage, since a man is reckoned as "raw" or "green" (khon dip) until then. This time in the temple is considered a pre-requisite to marriage. Sons entering full-time temple service pass on considerable merit to their mothers.

Ceremonies

The Buddhist calendar includes various annual ceremonies coordinated with the agricultural cycle. There are five notable Buddhist festivals which increase the income of the temple and priests, as well as providing a psychological relief or safety valve for the people. Most are fun occasions. Two of the most important ceremonies are ordination services for monks and novices, and funerals.

¹¹⁷National Statistical Office, "Statistical Summary of Thailand," quoted in Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 91.

The weekly holy day (wan phra), set by the lunar calendar, is also a central feature of Buddhist practice.

Although apparently inconsistent, the Thai view their highly syncretic religious composition as one integrated whole. They have chosen those elements out of animism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism which can be incorporated into the total system.

This chapter has explored some aspects of the historical, political, socio-economic, psychological, and religio-cultural factors affecting the attitudes of the Thais. Missions agencies working in Thailand must take these factors into account as they develop their strategy. Given this background, how can KIM approach the Thai people to build effective relationships?

CHAPTER II

THAI CHURCH-MISSION RELATIONSHIPS:

FOUR APPROACHES

Having discussed the historical, political, socio-economic, psychological, and religio-cultural background of the Thai people, this chapter will list a variety of options for Thai church-mission relationships. It will focus on the two progressive models of Peter Wagner and Harold Fuller and will synthesize them into a more comprehensive approach. It will then survey the relationship of the four major missions in Thailand with the national churches, emphasizing the historical, strategic and relational aspects from the beginnings of these works until today.

Theoretical Models

Different missions consider and practice a variety of models as ideal goals for their work. Louis King listed several options for mission/church relations overseas: (1) mission dominance or paternalism; (2) no mission, only the church; (3) dichotomy, cooperation of autonomous equals; (4) modified dichotomy; (5) partial or functional integration; (6) full integration or fusion; (7) partnership of equality

and mutuality.¹ This section, however, will discuss two progressive models, those of Peter Wagner and Harold Fuller, and will synthesize them.

Peter Wagner

Peter Wagner lists "four major phases of the progress of missionary work:"

Phase 1. The mission goes out to a group of non-Christians to evangelize and plant churches. The gospel is preached, converts are baptized, and the church is organized. The mission controls all of the work at this stage, since there is no alternative.

Phase 2. The mission works at church development, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is the first stage of organic growth in which responsibilities are shared but turned over to the national church as rapidly as possible. The mission controls less but still guides the process.

Phase 3. The mission becomes a consultant. The new church is autonomous, caring for its internal matters. At this phase the mission may choose to give up its self-identity and fuse with the church, working under the church leadership. On the other hand, it may choose to work parallel to the church, maintaining autonomy and carrying on a complementary [sic] program in agreement with the church. But withdrawal (such as Henry Venn suggests) should not be considered a proper option at this time--not until phase 4 is operating.

Phase 4. The church launches a mission. This is the real goal, but one that has been somewhat neglected. When the missionary vision reaches only as far as phase 3, it is myopic. Not nearly enough missionary strategy has been planned in terms of phase 4. Missions have seemed to be a necessary activity of the churches in the sending countries, but for some curious reason not too necessary in the emerging churches.²

Wagner stresses phase 4. Although any mission may

¹Louis King, "Mission/Church Relations Overseas: Part I: Principles," in Missions in Creative Tension, Virgil Gerber (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1971), p. 157.

²Peter Wagner, Frontiers in Missionary Strategy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 176-77.

establish new churches, the task should **not** be considered completed as long as the Great Commission still needs to be obeyed.

Harold Fuller/SIM International

Harold Fuller describes the four stages through which SIM International has passed as their ministry developed. In the first ("Pioneer") phase, missionaries enter a new area to preach the Gospel to the people for the first time. In the second phase, the missionary acts as a "Parent," gently and patiently teaching the "children" as they grow in the faith. Eventually, the church and mission enters the third phase, working together as "Partners" in the ministry. The object in this phase is to encourage the church to rely upon itself, and not on a foreign organization (although SIM did help the church as needed). Finally, the fourth stage ("Participant") is reached, in which the national church assumes the leadership of the work, continuing on toward the same goals as before with the mission assisting her. See figure 1.

Synthesis

The models of Wagner and Fuller can be combined to five developing phases of church/mission relationships.

Phase I: Pioneer

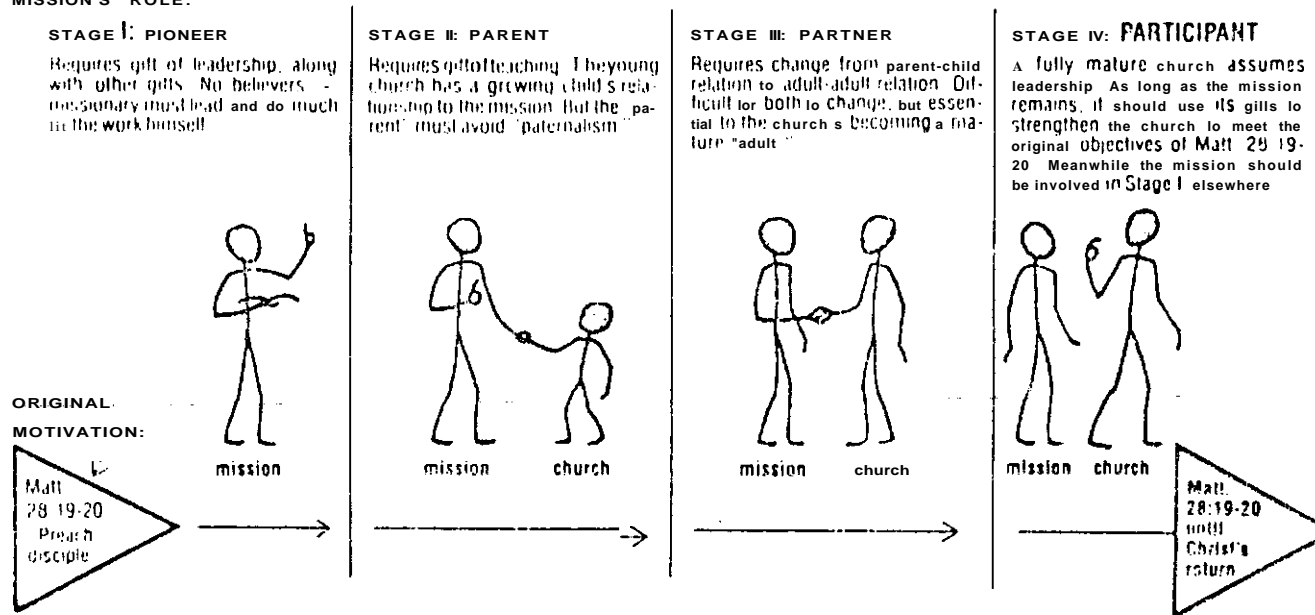
The Missionary begins **introducing** the Gospel message to those who are **living in** unreached areas. The missionary must lead and do much of the work **himself.**

FIGURE 1

MISSION-CHURCH RELATIONS: FOUR STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Notes
- A The attitudes developed in each stage affect the succeeding stage.
 - B Missionaries whose strong leadership gift made Stage I possible need to know how to change role to that of a counselor in Stage IV or may need to move to another area where their pioneering ability can be used.
 - C The main goal of mission and church should be the same, if both are doing God's Will

MISSION'S ROLE:



SOURCE: W. Harold Fuller, Mission-Church Dynamics
(Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1967) p. 212

50

phase II: Parent

The missionary teaches the young churches to grow into a mature adult church by discipling church pastors and lay leaders.

phase III: Partner

The church becomes autonomous and stands by herself. The church and the mission join together for outreach and share administration and spirituality, working together for the Great Commission.

Phase IV: Participant

A fully mature church assumes leadership. The mission should use its gifts to strengthen the church to meet its needs. Meanwhile, the mission should be involved in Phase I elsewhere.

Phase V: Prompter

The mission prompts the church to send missionaries to other ethnic groups in their own country and to other nations according to the Great Commission. This is the real goal. The prompting mission should work with the new mission and share its expertise with the emerging church. This last step does not necessarily have to wait until the indigenous church is governing its own affairs. For example, in 1912 the Korean church started its first cross-cultural mission. The church, having received Christianity through China, decided to send its missionaries to the Santung peninsula in China. Young HOON Kim, Tai RO Park and

Byung Hoon Sah were selected.³ David J. Cho summarizes the reaction to this effort among Western missionaries and the Chinese:

The bold initiatives by Koreans were but foolish and dauntless attempts in the eyes of Western missionaries. The Chinese church too considered the proposal a presumptuous daring. Although the two seemed to be highly prizing the missionary zeal of Koreans, in reality they were not willing to cooperate.⁴

Application of This Model to Thailand

This section will examine four missions agencies as an illustration of each of the four phases described above. (As of now, no agency has attempted to implement Phase V.) Before doing so, however, it will first describe the general organization of Protestant Christianity in Thailand so that the explanations of the missions may be more easily placed in the larger framework of the Thai Church.

Introduction to the Thai Church

At present, there are two main bodies within the Thai Church (excluding Roman Catholicism), the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT). The CCT has a communicant membership of approximately 30,695, with 208 organized churches and more than 80 worshipping groups. It also includes 33 foreign

³Hong Shik Shin, "National Independent Mission Movements in Korea" (Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 38.

⁴David J. Cho, "Contemporary Growth of Korean Missions," Asian Mission Advance, May 1980, p. 1.

missions affiliates (including Thai agencies).⁵ The EFT is a loose affiliation of more than 40 foreign missions, 37 Thai organizations, and 197 local churches.⁶ As of 1979, the EFT had a membership of approximately 14,100.⁷ In addition to the CCT and EFT, there are fourteen nonaffiliated and independent foreign missions agencies (including sects).⁸

phase I: The Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF)

In 1951, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), the new name of the China Inland Mission (CIM), began work in Thailand at the request of the Presbyterians. Within a few years OMF had the largest missionary force in Thailand; in 1984, OMF had 267 missionaries in four regions in Thailand, including those on furlough (see figure 2).⁹ In the North region, they focus on tribal evangelism among the Meo, Yao, Lisu, Ahka, Shan, and Pwo Karen. About 60 percent of OMF personnel minister in Central Thailand, about half of them in medical ministries in two hospitals and over a score of leprosy clinics. In the South region, OMF works with the large Muslim population and the Thais. Their recently begun work in the North-East region among a million mostly

⁵ Pradit Akrapram, Update Christian Directory (Bangkok: n.p., 1984), p. 18.

⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 56-62.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 45-48.

unreached Lao people has yielded only a handful of converts so far.¹⁰

As an interdenominational missionary society, OMF works to plant independent indigenous churches; these churches then affiliate themselves with the denomination of their choice. Their work focuses on the "Pioneer" phase, although some of their missionaries work with congregations in other organizations, including CCT.¹¹

TABLE 1

CHURCHES ASSOCIATED WITH OMF BY REGIONS (1978)

Region	Organized Churches	Unorganized Churches	Full-Time Church Paid Workers
North Thailand	27	50	4
Central Thailand	15	60	4
Bangkok	4	--	3
South (less Yala church*)	10	2	--
	56	112	11

SOURCE: Alex G. Smith, Siamese Gold, p.243.

NOTE: *Affiliated with CCT but served by OMF.

OMF emphasizes church planting, believing "a church in every community" provides the means of getting the "Gospel to every person." OMF's Central Thai field has set the goal of planting churches in every amphur town (each province is divided into amphurs, or districts) by A.D.

¹⁰Alex Smith, Strategy, pp. 103-4.

¹¹Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 243.

2002.¹² OMF has adopted innovative strategies to reach people in these urban areas. For example, the "new life houses" strategy was started by a group of Thai Christians with support from OMF missionaries in Bangkok. Hill describes this strategy as follows:

They rent a typical house in the target area and locate a basic team of well-disciplined members in the house. Many of their workers are university students or theological students at Bangkok Bible College. They have an intensive program of tract distribution and visitation in neighborhood. A full-time young pastor projects a program of Bible study, intensive fellowship, and worship, with the members spending almost all day Sunday at the Church. They have been able to start spiritually vibrant churches and grow mature church members.¹³

The major unresolved obstacle OMF has faced in the course of their Thai work is the lack of indigenous trained leaders and church workers. As a result, the missionary personnel must take care of all the needs of every newly organized church or Christian group. OMF churches also lack historical foundations, church patterns, hymnology, and forms of worship relevant to the Thai people. When they realized this basic problem, OMF decided to begin Bible training centers (which they call Bible Training Camps) in Phayao, Chiangrai, in 1967. This camp shows the desire for mutual cooperation between CCT and OMF. Large numbers of OMF personnel have contributed to CCT by unofficially giving spiritual help to rural churches and training rural youth

¹²Ibid., p. 245.

¹³Ronald C. Hill, Bangkok: An Urban Arena (Nashville: Convention Press, 1962), pp. 99-100.

whose needs the Chiangmai Seminary cannot meet. In return, evangelically oriented CCT leaders have helped the OMF Bible Camps, seminars, and Bible Colleges in Bangkok which are supported by OMF and the Christian and Missionary Alliance.¹⁴

OMF is an excellent example of "Pioneer" missions work in Thailand. From the beginning of its work, they have concentrated on introducing the Gospel to the unreached areas, particularly the Northern hill tribes, Central rural farmers, Southern Muslims, Northeastern Lao peoples, and urban Bangkok. Much work of this type is still needed in Thailand.

Phase II: The Christian and
Missionary Alliance (C&MA)

The C&MA started mission work in Thailand in early 1929 by transferring the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Gunter from Cambodia. Because there were no other missions working in Northeast Thailand, the Alliance decided to concentrate their efforts in that region. They first settled in Ubon and opened stations in Khon Kaen the following year. They established a Bible training school in Khorat which later moved to Khon Kaen as well.¹⁵

The C&MA'S strategy was to win Thais who in turn could be trained to reach their fellow countrymen. The field chairman in 1936 stated the mission's aim as follows:

¹⁴ Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, pp. 195-96.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 197.

We are praying today for a band of men and women saturated with the love of God and with humility which will make them willing to work for the Lord. Our task is to inspire these groups so that they will realize that they have been saved to serve and will carry the Gospel in their own idiom to their compatriots and thus accomplish what the missionary can never hope to do. This is our aim--self-propagation; and the native converts must be the evangelists (Field Report 1936).¹⁶

TABLE I

THE C&MA IN THAILAND (1972)

Population of the N.E. Area	1 1, 442, 000
Missionary personnel	52
Mission stations	8
National workers	104
Ordained national workers	10
Organized churches	58
Unorganized groups	60
Baptism in 1971	185
Bible school students	71
Correspondence course enrollees	7,136

SOURCE: Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 198.

Ford summarized the strategy for establishing a Beach Head (1928-41) as follows:

1. Sowing of the seed widely through literature distribution and preaching
2. Revisiting areas of particular response
3. Opening of chapels and reading rooms
4. Teaching Bible classes particularly training new believers in evangelism
5. Children's meetings
6. Eventual formation of church¹⁷

The work began to show results in 1938, when twelve students from the Bible School were appointed as "trained

¹⁶Norman Ford, "A History and Evaluation of the C&MA Mission in Thailand" (paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 3-4.

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workers" in evangelism. Unfortunately, the mission was obliged to halt its work in December, 1941, due to the Japanese entry into Thailand. At this time there were only seventy-five adult Christians in Northeast Thailand, some of whom had either transferred from or were converted by the CCT.¹⁹

Four missionaries returned after the war. From 1946 to 1953, this number rose to fifty-seven. The strategy of this period was to advance into unreached areas, to train national leaders, and to develop an indigenous church. By 1953, there were missionaries in all but five of the seventeen provinces in the Northeast. With that geographical advance came outreach to other ethnic groups: Cambodian-speaking Thais (1948), Chinese (1952), and Kui (1955). In 1949 the C&MA discouraged other missions from entering the area.

Most important to Alliance strategy was the goal of developing a Thai church that was **self-governing**, self-supporting, and **self-propagating**. Basic to this was the training of Thai in the Bible School who could become local pastors and evangelists. Short-term Bible schools were held throughout the provinces to train new believers and to direct promising students into the Central Bible School. During this period the Alliance put much effort into

¹⁸Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁹Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 190.

establishing, organizing, and building up the local church. In 1951, the Gospel Church of Thailand (GCT) was organized with its own officers and church constitution. The following year all missions subsidies to churches for local pastors were cut off. This action began a new stage for the Alliance's work in Thailand.²⁰

The decision to move to total self-support came from the C&MA New York board. The Thai mission readily agreed and called for a drastic change in its mode of operation. They felt that past policy had made them part of the problem in the Thai work. By 1953 the following steps had been taken to implement this policy:

1. spiritual leadership of all churches was self-supporting
2. spiritual leadership of all churches, was by called ordained or unordained pastors or by lay elected elders
3. all twenty organized churches were governed by [the] native church
4. twenty-three meeting places were entirely constructed by the Thai Christians
5. every organized church was responsible to evangelize the county in which it was located
6. mission supported evangelists [were] employed only on [a] one-year basis (Field Report: 1953)²¹

By 1955 the mission saw the indigenization process as complete: "Theory has become an accomplished fact;" the church was seen as standing "upon her own financial and administrative legs." By 1956 the C&MA was no longer paying the salary of any Thai evangelists. Besides its policy of

²⁰Ford, "C&MA Mission," pp. 6-7.

²¹Ibid., p. 10.

indigenization the mission saw its task as; that of pioneer evangelism and the building up of Christians.²²

While the "indigenization" may have seemed good in practice, it had devastating results. As Ford summarizes it:

. . . the "remarkable unity and co-operation" which had characterized mission and church to this point was shattered when "all hell broke loose" in 1953 due to missions policy to cut off financial support to Thai pastors and evangelists. This seems to have been particularly opposed by the church's [i.e., GCT's] executive committee who in 1955 and 1956 sought to dissolve the church's organization and return to mission support. This was not acceptable to the local church leadership who voted the move down. . . .

In 1958 a further breakdown occurred when the G.C.T. committee failed to send monthly financial reports to the churches. The churches in turn cut back their giving to the national treasury. In 1960 the problem of non-leperous and leperous churches began to surface in talks of a separation of the two.²³

Ford stated that 1962-74 was a tumultuous and sad experience for the Gospel Church of Thailand. It was a period characterized by strife, divisions, competition, misunderstanding, misuse of funds, and disaffection. The climax came in 1974 when representatives from N.Y. tried to mediate between two factions in the church. The attempt failed. A mission-church agreement was not signed and the mission and church officially parted company. One of the lasting effects of this turmoil was the continuing breakdown between the national church leadership and the local

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., pp. 9-10.

churches, a problem that is yet to be overcome.²⁴

The mission initiated many programs, such as forming a revival and evangelistic committee (1965), Evangelism in Depth (1968), and promoting youth conferences, local church Bible conferences, and people movements (1970). In 1973, the mission set the following goals:

1. That in urban centers a group or church be established per every approximately 7,000 population
2. That we work together with national churches in the North-east to establish a group or church in every village before 2000 A.D.²⁵

(Note that in 1974 this second goal was revised to establish one indigenous congregation or preaching point in every township by the year 2000.)

Another area of concern was that of leadership training. Evidently, the Central Bible School was not producing the right kind of leadership. Pastors were not accepted as spiritual leaders because of their youth.

In 1973, Alan Harwood evaluated the ministry of the C&MA and suggested two main reasons for the lack of growth:

1. The C&MA placed most of their missionaries in specialized jobs instead of evangelism, church planting and training lay-leaders by example
2. They lacked a plan to mobilize the Christians in witnessing and soul winning²⁶

In addition, Harwood saw three great hindrances to the growth of the church in Northeast Thailand: (1)

²⁴Ibid., p. 13.

²⁵Ibid., p. 15.

²⁶Ibid., p. 22.

syncretism within the church (i.e., no real conversion but continuing animistic and Buddhistic practices); (2) cultural barriers (i.e., Thais feeling they must leave their people to become Christians); (3) missionary barriers, including the imposition of Western patterns of church government, music, buildings, worship, evangelism, the lack of effective strategy and communication, and poor knowledge of the language.²⁷ According to Samuel Kim,

Many Christians in that area are dissatisfied with what they feel is a paternalistic attitude on the part of the missionaries toward nationals and an over-emphasis on self-support. Apparently, there are lapses in the harmony between the nationals and the missionaries. For instance, twelve churches and ten local pastors in the Udorn area decided to withdraw from the relations to the C&MA mission. . . . This kind of internal disharmony and poor national leadership is still a problem.²⁸

In the Alliance youth work, Kim argues that the greatest need is to reach entire families, since the youth cannot stand without family recognition.²⁹ Alex Smith stated the same opinion concerning group decisions:

One cannot help but wonder whether the C&MA (and other missions) would not do well to make every effort to induce group decisions, whereby ten to fifteen or thirty to forty families at a time become Christian. When becoming Christian involves social dislocation, the whole social pressure pulls Christians back into nominality, reversion and falling away. Where groups become Christian, social pressures in large part hold them in the Church. This has been the secret of the amazing church growth among the Karen animists in Burma,

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²⁸ Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 199.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 200.

whereas one-by-one growth from among the Buddhists there has kept that Church (like the Church in Thailand) weak and small.³⁰

Norman Ford suggested the following concerning the future work of the C&MA in Thailand:³¹

1. Identification with the Thai people by the missionary
2. A sound evangelistic strategy
 - a) Evangelism must remain a priority over church nurture
 - b) Church growth is the goal
 - c) Focus on the cities
 - d) Win the winnable
 - e) Promote people movements
 - i) Accept power encounters
 - c) Incorporate radio and correspondence course response into the Church
 - h) Set the example
3. Deepening the indigenous concept
4. Culturally relevant leadership training

We have seen that the Alliance's strategy for their ministry in Thailand is based on keeping the mission and the local church completely autonomous. In the actual work, however, the mission tends toward paternalistic control over the GCT, due in part to the unreadiness of the GCT to govern itself completely and in part to the attitudes of the

³⁰ Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 235.

³¹ Ford, "C&MA Mission," pp. 25-37.

missionaries themselves. This tension has produced a great deal of conflict and has hampered the work of both the Alliance and the CCT.

Phase III: The Southern Baptist Mission

The Southern Baptist Mission began its work in Thailand in 1949. The first thirteen members of the Thailand Baptist Mission were formerly missionaries to China, and so they began working among the Chinese in Bangkok. Bangkok Baptist Church was organized on September 16, 1951, with fifteen members and Deaver Lawton and Rudolph Russell as co-pastors. The charter members of the church were three Chinese converted in mainland China, two Indians, and two Americans working with the United States government, in addition to the missionaries. In 1952 the name was changed to Grace Baptist Church.

The missionaries realized that they would have to work in the Thai language if they were going to reach the mainstream of the population. Frances Hudgins and Mary Gould began studying Thai and started a fellowship for Thai students in their home. In 1953 a Baptist student ce was opened. In November of the same year, Immanuel Baptist Church was organized with nineteen members, the first church begun among the Thais by Southern Baptists. Later, the English-speaking members formed the Calvary Baptist Church. The Grace Baptist Church continued to be made up of Chinese language speakers from the local Chinese community.

From these beginnings have come fourteen churches

and chapels, the centerpiece of the Southern Baptist effort in Bangkok. Their churches not only grew among the people in the Bangkok area, but also among the people of the provincial areas, including Ayutthaya, Chachengsao, Bangkokla, Chonburi and Songkhla, with chapels and preaching points in many other places. As Alex Smith indicates, one strong feature of Southern Baptist growth has been this multiplication of churches. "In the first three years (1952-1954) three churches were established--one a year. From 1958 to 1973 these three churches grew to seventeen. . . ." ³² The statistics for the Thai Baptist Church in 1972, 1978, and 1982 are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

THAI BAPTIST CHURCH STATISTICS

	1972	1978	1982
Churches	15 (1069)	23 (1226)	26 (1450)
Chapels (mission posts)	13 (238)	9 (137)	6 (83)
Home groups and preaching posts	19 (115)	37 (285)	66 (220)
Total	47 (1422)	69 (1648)	98 (1753)

SOURCE: Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 240.

NOTE: 1. The Southern Baptist Church, Statistical Report: June 1, 1981 to May 31, 1982. (Mimeographed).

2. (): The number of members.

³²Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 240.

Southern Baptists have also used various specialized approaches that have become organized as offices or institutions. The "support institutions" are the seminary, Baptist Christian Education (which includes publication of literature), Baptist Leadership Training (TEE), the bookstore, and the seaside encampment. Another group of institutions are the "outreach institutions." These institutions include the hospital, the student center, and the mass communications office.³³ The mission decided to focus on team ministries in the cities, particularly Bangkok, as a result of studying the Pauline missionary strategy in the book of Acts.³⁴ As a result, by 1981 the total Thai and Chinese membership was 1,526--78 percent of which was in Bangkok or the provincial centers.³⁵

In 1975, the mission decided to reexamine their goals and performed an in-depth self-study. Through talks with missionaries, national leaders, and outside people, they came to a series of decisions and commitments about a new direction for Baptist work in Thailand. "This direction was a pledge to focus on the planting of as many churches as possible and to bend every resource--missionaries, budgets,

³³Hill, Bangkok, pp. 36-44; Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, pp. 200-1.

³⁴Hill, Bangkok, p. 44.

³⁵Ibid., p. 51.

institutions, and programs to this one overriding goal."³⁶

Late in 1975, at the mission's Thanksgiving retreat, Ralph Neighbor shared his vision for reaching Singapore and outlined his developing strategy for that city. Neighbor said, "Singapore's plan won't do for Bangkok. The principles should work, but you will have to find God's plan for Bangkok based on the principles but applied to the specific situation."³⁷ As a result, Judson Lennon, Bill Beckham (an East Texas pastor who had recently been appointed for urban evangelism in Bangkok), Bill Smith (another new missionary appointed for on-campus student evangelism on Bangkok's university campuses), and Ronald Hill (mission administrator for Thailand) met together to lay the groundwork for developing a strategy to reach Bangkok. The four of them prayed and searched the Word of God, meeting weekly to clarify their vision before sharing it with their Thai brothers. At that early stage, they had a conviction that any pattern for outreach in Bangkok had to be built on the following principles:

1. It must be biblical
2. It must be truly Thai
3. It must have the whole city in view but focus on neighborhoods
4. It must be done as a team (body of Christ, Paul's team)
5. It must break down the whole evangelistic/church planting task into its component parts
6. It must start with the existing church base
7. It must be based on research (sociological,

³⁶Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 240

³⁷Hill, Bangkok, p. 53.

- anthropological, communications, religious)
8. It must be willing to experiment and fail
 9. It must be God's plan--saturated, in prayer and led by the spirit
 10. It must be simple and transferable³⁸

Moving toward a plan that was truly Thai, four missionaries formed a joint team with four national pastors who were appointed by the Thailand Baptist Churches Association, Boonkrong Pitakanon, Wan Petchsongkram, Boonma Phantasri, and Sawong Klaisamret. They discovered the "foundation principles of evangelism" through interaction after weekly meetings for prayer, Bible study, discussion, and dreaming. A summary of these principles follows:

1. Outreach in Bangkok must be Thai, a principle dramatized in the political upheaval of Southeast Asia
2. Christian discipleship is necessary for effective outreach
3. God desires to use the existing churches in Bangkok as "Base Churches"
4. An understanding of Thais in Bangkok by sociological study is important to outreach
5. We must identify people in their homogeneous neighborhood . . . "zeroing in" on the target neighborhoods instead of scattering all over the city
6. Preevangelism is necessary to reach people effectively through every type of media
7. People touched with friendship ministry are more open to the gospel
8. Decision-directed Bible study is an effective method of winning the receptive
9. New member discipleship is one of the most important tasks of the church
10. God will gather his Church out of disciplined Christians³⁹

The Baptists thus sought to build an indigenous

³⁸Ibid., p. 55.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 56-57.

church, to test these principles, to establish a model for Thai ministry, and to gather leaders who were experienced with and committed to this strategy, in the hope that it would become a movement of the Holy Spirit among His people.⁴⁰

Overall, the Southern Baptist mission is a good partner with Thai churches. For example, the missionaries do not do all the work of ministry but instead train nationals to do it. The first base church for the plan described above, Thonburi Baptist Church, started a 52 week training program for its members. Missionary Bill Beckham did not do the training himself, but taught the material to Sancong Muanpatch, a seminary graduate and church leader, who in turn taught the class. When the team went out into the neighborhood to implement specific ministries, Bill and Mary went along but kept in the background because of the Thai reaction to Christianity as the farang's religion.⁴¹

According to Boonkrong Pitakanon, the former pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist church in Bangkok, the Southern Baptist churches are not only the most rapidly growing but also have come to maturity in terms of self-support, self-government, and intensive Bible training programs. Boonkrong emphasizes that the Thai Southern Baptist

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 61.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 64-65.

communities are becoming more and more independent. First, they have had mature, well-educated Asian Baptist church leaders who came to Thailand from Hong Kong, mainland China, Singapore, and Taiwan from the beginning. Second, they have a firm, Bible-believing, evangelical faith, and theology. And third, they have a firm local financial base.⁴² Thus the Thai leaders do their share of the work of ministry in a good and effective partnership with the Baptist missionaries.

The Southern Baptist Mission began its works with mature, well-educated Asian Baptist church leaders. This makes it easy for them to work in partnership with Thai Christians. The missionaries and national leaders have worked together particularly well in developing strategies. The more local leaders are involved the better strategies will be developed.

Phase IV: American Presbyterian Mission

In August, 1840, William P. Buell and his wife arrived in Bangkok under the American Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. The Presbyterians have maintained a continuing mission in one form or another up to the present. They met many barriers, including an anti-foreign king, opposition from Buddhist priests, and rampant disease. In 1849, the first Presbyterian Church was organized with the

⁴²Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 201.

missionaries and Chinese Qua Kieng.⁴³ Ten years later, they baptized their first Thai convert.⁴⁴ From the beginning of its work in Thailand, the Presbyterian mission was staffed by highly qualified personnel.⁴⁵ Daniel McGilvary, "the Apostle of the Lao," served in Thailand from 1858 until his death in 1910. He traveled thousands of miles over northern mountains in order to establish churches and mission stations. He traveled more widely, established more churches, and evangelized more people than any other missionary in Thailand.⁴⁶

Smith analyzed McGilvary's theory of church planting and the practice he regularly followed:

1. To keep missionaries mobile, branching out and constantly breaking new ground for Christ. . . . They set the extension example for new churches to follow
2. Win mature adults and especially influential persons for Christ. Particularly encourage families to be baptized together. Give them concentrated instruction on the Christian life, their responsibility to the Lord, to His Church and to the lost
3. Let new believers take initial responsibility to evangelize their own relatives, friends and neighbors. Their zeal, joy and newfound faith are crucial advertisements of their change of life. Let new Christians face the opposition themselves
4. Trust the believers in virgin areas to the care of the Holy Spirit. Teach them early to depend on God and their own resources. Avoid the "dependence on the missionary syndrome"
5. Don't overly pamper or "crowd" the developing

⁴³Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 26.

⁴⁴Alex Smith, Strategy, p. 97.

⁴⁵Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p! 184.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 186.

churches in the early stages. Infuse new churches with missionary vision and spirit. Encourage each church to sacrifice the best of leaders and energies in the extension of the Gospel. Let them exercise their wings. Don't concentrate mission forces in revived congregations

6. Train leaders at various levels and in proportion to the need. Major on lay witness, ruling elders and pastoral help at the local level. A few young men should be trained at higher levels for future organic church growth and international interaction. But the proportion must be balanced carefully: higher levels should be limited to the selected few, but the training of many at lower levels of leadership is necessary for a Church's health and continued growth⁴⁷

In the North, the Church grew rapidly. McGilvary saw it develop from less than forty in 1879 to over 4,000 by his death in 1911. It reached 6,900 by 1914. But the southern churches did not reach a membership of one thousand until 1915.⁴⁸ The differences in strategy contributed to this difference in growth rates. In the North, McGilvary's strategy of diligent itinerant evangelism was aimed at planting churches "now." In the South, the emphasis was on education in preparation for evangelism, hoping for a church "tomorrow." Hugh Taylor describes the results of these strategies during the "church growth movement (1884-1914) as follows:

Educating first in order to evangelize produced "a few well-educated, outstanding leaders for the Church," but did not produce a large Church. The "evangelize first and then educate" approach resulted in a Church many times as large with many more consecrated leaders who are not so well educated possibly, but are well enough

⁴⁷Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, pp. 88-89.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 93.

equipped to meet the needs of the Church.⁴⁹

Smith goes on to explain that,

During twenty-six long years, 1914-1940, the annual average growth rate of the Church was only 0.7 percent per annum. This was far below the rate of normal biological growth, which incorporates children of Christians into church membership.⁵⁰

Another significant reason for declining church growth was the priority given to Christian schools and hospitals. In 1938, John L. Eakin, missionary to Thailand of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., wrote his observations. j

One of the most startling results of missionary labors in Siam is the growth of the educational work, especially since 1911. At that time there were only 37 mission schools, very few of which offered more than four years' work and none of which boasted a Complete high school course. Only 800 students attended these schools. By 1925, there were 53 schools, carrying part or full grade school work, and four institutions which might be termed high schools. Not all of these, however, offered the full four years of training. At that time the number of students was over 3,000, an increase of 2,200 in fourteen years. After another thirteen years we find there are today sixty-five grade schools (an increase of twelve) many of which offer also some high school work, and there are now six full-fledged high schools, honored by the government for their contribution to education. Moreover, the receipts of these schools have grown in the last thirteen years from \$54,000 to \$81,688, and the pupils from 3,000 to 5,569.⁵¹

Eakin pinpoints one of the major causes for the decline in church growth in this period:

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 145. j

⁵¹ John L. Eakin, "Siam," quoted in Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, pp. 159-60.

At first the need for more educational missionaries for this growing work was met by the increase in foreign staff. But, during the last ten years, with an ever decreasing staff, many ordained evangelists were of necessity drawn into fulltime or part time school work. Naturally, the evangelistic work suffered thereby.⁵²

As a result of this educational emphasis, between 1914 and 1940 many key Thai and missionary evangelists, pastors, and church planters were withdrawn from church ministries to work in schools.⁵³ In 1939 Alexander McLeish visited Thailand and studied the impact of this emphasis on education. Summarizing the actual situation of church growth, McLeish concluded

. . . that the school in Thailand has not proved as vitally evangelistic as was hoped. . . . It would be hard to justify all the present educational and medical work, if the Church continues to decline. . . . This does not mean that there has been too much of such education or the needs of Thailand, but that in relation to missionary resources the balance of activity has been disturbed. . . . nothing is more urgently needed than a widespread rural evangelism with maximum staff that can be freed for this purpose. . . . the best policy of missions would be to concentrate on those classes in Thailand which have shown the greatest response, namely, the people of the Northern Province, those of Eastern Thailand, the Chinese and the Thai-Chinese. The establishment of a strong Church among these groups might in the long run be the best and quickest way of reaching the more strongly opposed Buddhist population.⁵⁴

During this period when mission strategy focused on education, the relationship between the mission and the Thai church changed significantly. In February, 1929, John R.

⁵²Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, p. 160.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Alexander McLeish, Today in Thailand (Siam), quoted in Alex Smith, Siamese Gold, pp. 168-69.

Mott came to Thailand and took the initiative in arranging a conference of some fifty delegates, both Thais and missionaries, in order to discuss the findings of the Jerusalem Conference on World Missions (1928). The Jerusalem Conference emphasized the unity and equality of all Christians, the only distinction being between "older" and "younger" churches. The Mott Conference led to a new concept in the minds and hearts of Christian leaders in Thailand. From this time onward they worked toward the formation of an indigenous national church. On April 7-11, 1934, the first General Assembly of the new church was held in Bangkok. The Assembly adopted a constitution and chose the name, "The Church of Christ in Siam" (later "in Thailand") in the hope that all Protestant bodies would become members of this autonomous national church.

~~After World War II~~, the policy-makers of mission agencies in the West became aware of the rapid growth and revolutionary thinking of the younger churches in Asia. The integration between the mission and the Thai national church was initiated by representatives of the Presbyterian Board (COEMAR). They firmly believed that resolution of church and mission tensions was in harmony with the best insights of the ecumenical movement. The primary concern of integration was to dissolve the mission organization and

⁵⁵W. Richey Hogg, "Conferences, World Missionary," Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission, 1971, pp. 133-38.

bring all its works under the direction of the national church. Kim quoted one of the key promoters of integration:

From now on there will no longer be missionary or nationals, giver or receiver, west or east. The Foreign mission will be integrated with the national church, as completely as salt dissolves in water.⁵⁶

But although the Thai church achieved her independence, she knew that she had to continue to depend on the mission for financial, technical, and even personnel assistance. The Thai churches did not really try to become self-supporting and the missionaries did not encourage them to face their need to be self-supporting.⁵⁷ The Presbyterian mission had controlled the Thai national churches and supplied 80 to 90 percent of its funds. Akkapiin criticized the Presbyterian policy in the Thai quarterly, Think:

Since the integration ten years ago, the power and influences of the missionaries still exist in our administration as much as before. Nothing has been changed. We saw one of our executive officers submit his resignation. He is sort of a rubber stamp.

Kim stated:

Apparently the gap between the Thai leaders and the missionaries was getting wider and wider. Even though the Thai Church and the Western missions were trying to function in harmony, it still appeared that there was no confidence and mutual cooperation between them. Unless the national church has strong leadership and was a self-supporting, self-governing church, integration

⁵⁶Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 81.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 76-77.

⁵⁸Pisanu Akkapiin, "Archbishop of Thailand," quoted in Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 83.

would not have been recommendable. . . . As long as the missionaries remain in control, integration is nothing more than a farce, and our Christian partnership will be a white-washed tomb. Without the spiritual harmony and real sense of togetherness of belonging under the Holy Spirit, formal integration ties mean very little and become merely a symbolic and ecumenical decoration of ecumenism.⁵⁹

Since they integrated with the CCT in 1958, the Presbyterian mission has tried to reduce this influence in church affairs and turn over their power to the nationals, including financial allocations and assignments of missionary personnel. Even though the Presbyterian mission technically no longer existed, the missionaries provided theological leadership and influenced major CCT policies until the 1960's. After that, "the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has tried to reduce its financial contributions (annually by at least 5 percent), personnel, and even their century-old responsibilities."⁶⁰ This situation with the Presbyterians is paralleled in other missions affiliated with the CCT.

The younger generation in the Thai Church has been seeking for a way to fill the hierarchy and the leading positions in the CCT with Thais rather than with Western missionaries or other foreigners. The younger people think that foreigners leading the Thai Church not only make the non-Christian Thais think Christianity is a foreign religion, but also is a disgrace to the Thai Christians, who

⁵⁹Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, pp. 84-85.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 188.

thus appear to be followers of foreigners and unfaithful to their own country. This nationalizing movement has been largely successful. As Kim observes:

Today, the CCT's leading positions are almost entirely occupied by the Thai leaders, and it is generally understood that the missionaries are not supposed to be appointed to the important positions of the national church.⁶¹

The American Presbyterian Mission's relationship with the CCT is not as a true participant. Although they were integrated as fraternal workers in 1934, the CCT has not grown enough to be a self-supporting church. The mission therefore has dominated the church financially and theologically, although they have tried to reduce their influence. The CCT should grow as an indigenous church, initiating its own projects and relying more on national leadership. Only then will the mission "participate" with the CCT in the ministry in Thailand, using their abilities and their spiritual gifts under the national church.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 179.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF KOREAN MISSIONS IN THAILAND

In previous chapters, the writer has discussed the key factors which affect the attitudes of Thais, the theoretical models of church-mission relationships, and four approaches of Western missions in Thailand.

This chapter will survey Korean missions in Thailand from 1956 to the present. Although the Korean Church has been involved in sending missionaries out to other countries since 1912, this period immediately following the Korean War was a time of new interest and activity. As a Third World country reaching out to other Third World countries, the mission to Thailand in 1956 demonstrated Korea's zeal for missions despite their lack of experience and of financial and personal support.

Four Korean Missions' Approaches

Presbyterian Mission of Korea

The burning missionary zeal rose up from the dedicated Christians in the midst of the ruined streets of the Korean War (1950-1953). Even before they were restored from the destruction of the war and from poverty, in 1956, the Presbyterian Mission Board sent two young ordained ministers, Chan Young Choi (in May) and Samuel I. Kim (in

resources as an independent congregation/denomination.

In this chapter the writer has surveyed four different approaches of Korean Missions, the Presbyterian Church Mission Korea and KIM as fraternal worker, KPM as paternalistic leaders, KEC as partners. Each of them has strengths and weaknesses. They need to develop effective relationships between the mission and the church and to establish good fellowship with each other as minority missions from Korea.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Korean Missionaries in Thailand

Since 1956 Korean missionaries have served churches in Thailand. KIM and KEC have concentrated on Thailand as their main mission field. Korean missionaries have many strengths and weaknesses not shared by other missionaries who are working in Thailand. As Asian missionaries, they have similar cultural and economic backgrounds. Since they come from a younger church than their Western counterparts, they have similar struggles as the Thais. Koreans also have some church models which might be adaptable to Thailand. These similarities should make missions work in Thailand easier for Koreans, as Daniel C. Hardin suggested in the following graph:³⁷ (See Figure 2.) However, Korean missionaries must also overcome many of the weaknesses which

³⁷Daniel C. Hardin, Mission: A Practical Approach to Church Sponsored Mission Work (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1978), p. 142.

are related to their strengths.

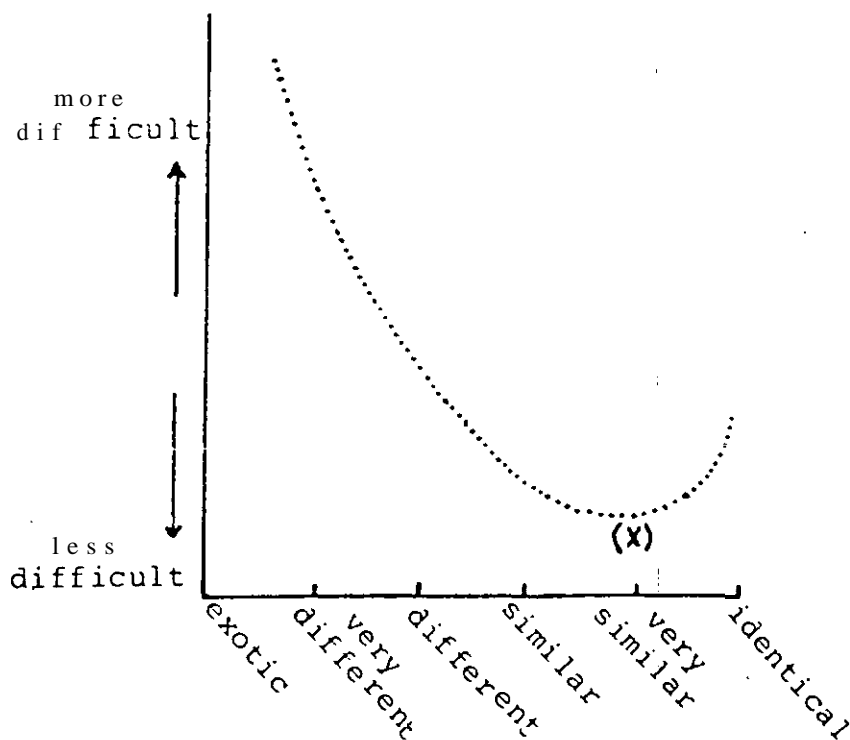
Two Asian Cultures

Strengths

Korea and Thailand are Asian neighbors with many racial, cultural, religious and socio-political similarities.

FIGURE 2

ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTY



SOURCE: Hardin, Mission, p. 142.

NOTE: Suggested graph illustrating the possible reversing of a direct and positive relationship between Difficulty and Difference at a point near the identical section of the difference scale.

Racial Similarity

Even though Korea and Thailand are different countries their people are still very similar physically in

race and color. Asian missionaries working in Asia usually face less resistance and antagonism because of their physical appearance and cultural similarity. The majority of the people in the fields are friendly and in many cases show their intimacy towards Asian missionaries. Elmer J. Sahlberg stated that, in his experience in Thailand, "Asians giving the gospel to Asians have a big advantage."³⁸ Samuel Kim stated that there is some kind of invisible ethnic wall or cultural line existing between the Thais and Western missionaries. The Thai Christians often say to Asian missionaries, "Well, we can frankly speak to you because you are not a farang missionary. We feel you are one of us."³⁹ Furthermore, "the local people easily [approach] them without prejudice and suspicion."⁴⁰ Most Thais think that Christianity is a Western religion; but when they see some Asian missionaries, and understand that Christianity is not only a Western religion but also Asian, it provides a new understanding of the body of Christ and new opportunities for the Gospel.

Cultural Similarity

Korean and Thai cultures are similarly influenced by Chinese Confucianism and by Indian Buddhism. James Wong

³⁸Elmer J. Sahlberg, "Overcrowded Thailand Needs More Asians?" Alliance Witness, September 14, 1983, p. 18.

³⁹Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 95.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 94.

stated comparing Asian and Western missionaries, "Asians have the advantage of experiencing less culture shock. Therefore, due to COMMON cultural values and traditions, they would find greater ease in adjusting to new situations."⁴¹ Samuel Kim also stated,

Asian missionaries in Thailand are generally well adjusted and also accepted by the local people without any serious efforts for cultural adjustment. They can readily build up an effective communication bridge through their inborn empathy which flows out from similar cultural background in Asia.⁴²

Alison R. Lanier stated in Update: South Korea as a Westerner, "The most difficult adjustment is to the fact that we THINK differently. Our sense of what is important (i.e., our values) differ; we move on different wave lengths."⁴³ She listed some of the types of differences, including:

Courtesy is often more important than directness. They are concerned with saving your face--or their own; with avoiding offense by a negative or a confrontation. If the answer is not a full "yes," therefore, they may answer obliquely to soften the "no," or may evade the questions or reply merely with a polite smile.⁴⁴

In Asia, most people choose the attitude of "both . . . and" rather than "either . . . or" which is usual in American

⁴¹Peter Larson, Edward Pentecost, and James Wong, "Regional Analysis and Interpretation," in Readings in Third World Missions ed. Marlin L. Nelson (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), p. 76.

⁴²Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 97.

⁴³Alison R. Lanier, Update: South Korea (Chicago: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1982), p. 68.

⁴⁴Ibid.

society. This is true both in Korea and in Thailand. They are not being dishonest, tricky, or evasive but are illustrating a deep cultural difference from Westerners.

John P. Fieg pointed out Thai politeness as the most important aspect of a social relationship is as follows:

If they have to choose between politeness and sincerity, they will usually choose the former, leading one American anthropologist to term Thai politeness a "social cosmetic" in that it at once enhanced a person's natural qualities but also inevitably concealed them. The most important aspect, then, of a social relationship is the psychic comfort and welfare of the persons involved rather than the objective or validity of the matter discussed.⁴⁵

It is very similar in Korea. Therefore both Korean and Thai Christians have to develop a biblical practice against this cultural background.

The traditional Thai view of power and authority is also very similar to Korea's. Authority and power have been considered natural to the human condition. The traditional organizations of Thailand and Korea were built on line of command. The centralized power and system affected people's thinking in many areas of their lives.

The basic Thai hierarchical pattern which is summarized by Michael Moerman is also similar to Korea: "Younger-elder, child-parent, layman-priest, peasant-official-bonds between inferior and superior compose the family, the village, and the nation."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Fieg, InterAct, p. 31.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 14.

Many elements of Chinese civilization have flooded into both Korea and Thailand from the beginning. For example, the Yi kings of Korea took their political inspiration from the Confucian classics and from Chinese practice of the T'ang (618-905) and Ming (1368-1628) dynasties.⁴⁷ Like the Chinese and other Asians (including Koreans), the Thais belong to Mongolian stock. The dominant ethnic group in Thailand migrated from the southern part of China.⁴⁸ These similarities help build mutual respect, trust, and cooperation in mission-church relationships.

Religious Similarity

As already described in Chapter I Thai religion is a syncretistic multimixture with relics of animism, Buddhism, teachings of Confucious, Taoism, Shamanism, Muslim, etc.

The popular Korean religion is also internally or practically speaking, a syncretism--namely relics of animism, Shamanism, Buddhism, teachings of Confucious, Taoism, Christianity, etc. For example, Palmer observed Shamanism in Korea. Shamanism has traditionally retained the most powerful religious influence upon the population as a whole. Shamanism absorbed from Confucianism and Buddhism nearly everything of a supernatural character possessed by

⁴⁷Spencer J. Palmer, Korea and Christianity (Seoul: Hollym Corporation Publishers, 1967), p. 37.

⁴⁸Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 4.

them.⁴⁹

Especially the Animistic, Shamanistic, Buddhistic, and Confucian backgrounds of both Korea and Thailand are very similar not only in religious practices but also in their world view. This common background is a advantage for developing evangelistic outreach among the adherents of Buddhism in Thailand. For example, in both Korea and Thailand there is a strong cultural sense that people get what they deserve: "Do good, receive good; do evil, receive evil."⁵⁰ It is up to you. Everyone should get results according to his doing something. That kind of belief is in Korea generally.

The other major similarity is monistic belief in every religion in both countries. They believe everything which happens in their body is caused by spiritual reasons. This monistic approach is far different from the Western dualistic approach.

Foreigners find a fervent enthusiasm about religion both in Korea and in Thailand, as Paul saw that in every way they were very religious in Athens.⁵¹ The goal of the missionaries is thus to direct this zeal to Jesus Christ rather than to false gods. Korean missionaries having a similar religious background may be more effective in doing

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁰Fieg, InterAct, p. 23.

⁵¹Acts 17:22-23.

this than Westerners.

Socio-political similarity

As well as most of the Asian countries, Thailand and Korea have similarities sociologically, such as family-centeredness, the authority of charismatic leaders, and the people-oriented society. They are also confronting communist power, so strong military powers affect their governments politically.

Asians think that the extended family and the parents' authority are very important to make decisions. Chua Wee Hian pointed out the difference between the East and the West.

Asians find it difficult to witness personally to their friends and relatives. In Asia, conformity is a great virtue . . . Asians fear to disrupt the ties of family, clan, brotherhood, and other communal units. In the West every man makes his own decision, but this is not so in the East. There the family or the **clan** has to be consulted.⁵²

Confucius once said, "Whilst thy father lives, look for his purpose; when he is gone, look how he walked. To change nothing in thy father's way for three years may be called pious."⁵³ Korean missionaries have experience in this kind of problem and can easily understand **Thais** and help them effectively. Cell group evangelistic meetings, collective

⁵²Chua Wee Hian, "Encouraging Missionary Movements in Asian Churches" in Readings in Third World Missions, ed. Nelson, p. 17.

⁵³Bong Pin Ro, "Asian Pastors for Asian Churches," Christianity Today, October 2, 1981, p. 41.

evangelism, and people movements should be used.

A charismatic leader has great influence with people both in the church as well as in the society. Church growth depends on the leadership of creative and Spirit-filled pastors and lay leaders. Many significant growing churches in Bangkok depend also on charismatic leaders.

Bong Ro described the authority of pastors and lay leader in Asia:

In the Eastern culture, where the Confucian filial piety concept has been ingrained in people for centuries, the authority and responsibility of an elder and teacher are notable. Pastors and lay leaders thus carry enormous authority in the life of the churches. Effective, well-trained leaders can become quite significant.⁵⁴

In Asian society, people-oriented thought is more important than the time and task focus of American society. Marvin K. Mayers said:

One society may be experience-oriented whereas another society may be time-oriented. A visitor in the United States notes a great deal of time orientation, i.e., careful attention is paid to the clock; there is extreme concern for meetings held during a specific time period; these meetings are to start and end on time; . . . The contrast is striking when one enters the Philippines. The people are more concerned with who is there and what is going on than when something starts and ends.⁵⁵

Koreans and Thais have the same feelings with the Philippines.

Thailand and Korea have both been living under the shadow of Communism. After the Korean War (1950-1953),

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Marvin K. Mayers, Christianity Confronts Culture (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 158-59.

Korea was divided into two different governments. Korea has tension from communistic power and have experience the cruelties of the Communists. According to David J. Cho's report about the Korean War, 300,000 Christians lost their lives, more than one thousand church leaders were either arrested or abducted, and more than two thousand church buildings were destroyed.⁵⁶ Korean Church and missionaries knew what communism is and how Christians need to oppose it by spiritual alertness and prayer. Alex Smith pointed out that, "The unstable condition of Southeast Asia, especially since 1975, has doubtless had a sobering effect on thinking people. They knew and experienced communism during the Vietnam War and their invasion of Laos and Cambodia. Even the Vietnamese troops invaded Thai borders and refugee camps in Thailand. In that political situation, Korea and Thailand have the same feelings about communism, and so are concerned about the danger of invasion. As a result, military influences are very strong in the governments of both countries.

Weaknesses

Understanding the differences between the two countries

Although Korean missionaries have similarities with Thais in many areas, they have some differences also.

⁵⁶David J. Cho, "Contemporary Growth of Korean Missions," Asian Missions Advance, May 1980, p. 2.

⁵⁷Alex Smith, "Thai Churches Grow 79% in 10 Years,"

Kane's statement about the problem is true. "There is also the problem of orientation and adjustment. The Asian missionary will experience his share of culture shock."⁵⁸ He also said:

Then again, the people of these countries don't make the same allowance for Oriental missionaries that they do for missionaries from the West. Western missionaries have white skin, blue eyes, and blonde hair. Obviously they are foreigners and allowance has to be made for them; but Orientals look pretty much alike wherever they originate, and because they look alike they are expected to think and act alike. Consequently the people are less patient with Oriental missionaries when they make mistakes than they are with Western missionaries.⁵⁹

Some Thai friends often asked Samuel Kim: "Acharn, do you still consider yourself Korean after you have been in our country for so long? Do you still love your country more than Thailand?"⁶⁰

Korean missionaries try to identify with Thais, but they have differences which Thais do not understand enough.

Adjusting to the missionary community

Korean missionaries have to adjust not only to Thai language and culture but also to English, the language of their fellow missionaries, and to American culture as well.

Asia Theological News, July-September 1982, p. 13.

⁵⁸J. Herbert Kane, "Evangelization: Problem of National Missions" in Readings in Third World Missions, ed. Nelson, p. 201.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Samuel Kim, Unfinished Mission, p. 99.

the difficulties to adjust to in missionary society are not only English but also the standards of living.

Some Korean missionaries have an inferiority complex in comparison to Western missionaries.

Two Developing Countries

At the beginning of the 1980's Korea could be categorized as one of the world's middle-income, industrializing countries. The Korean War reduced most Korean families to an equal degree of poverty. Total war damages were equivalent to about U.S. \$3.1 billion, or 86 percent of Korea's gross national product in 1953. The government propelled the economy from agricultural production to export-oriented industrialization. The government pushed the per capita gross national product from the equivalent of U.S. \$87 in 1962 to roughly U.S. \$1,503 in 1980. Yet private enterprise and initiative provided the basic motivation for economic growth. Agricultural production took place on small, efficient, owner-operated plots, and most businesses were small-scale, family-owned farms. Korean missionaries who are raised in this economic situation have some strengths as well as weaknesses in serving the Thai Church.

⁶¹Detailed evidence in Frederica M. Bunge, South Korea, a Country Study Washington D.C.: American University, 1982), pp. 109-11.

strengths

Easy to understand the people's
ethos and standard of living

It is very important for the missionary to understand the nationals' mind and their standard of living. Korean missionaries understand Thais easily, not by reading but by experiencing. The two countries have very similar economic backgrounds. Koreans are familiar with the problems Thailand is facing, including the struggles with industrialization, economic insecurity in the transitional period of industrialization and the deep gap between the poor and the rich. Having faced these situations in their own country, Koreans can more easily understand Thais and help them by sharing their own experiences in Korea. Kim said that because of the relatively lower living standard of the Asian missionaries, the Thais tend to come nearer and closer to them than to missionaries from the West. They develop deeper and more intimate friendships with each other. The Asian missionaries' lower standard of living is useful and offers new possibilities of dialogue with the people.⁶² The Thais attitude toward Koreans is, "We consider you one of us. That's why we can discuss these problems with you."⁶³

These kinds of friendships enable Asian missionaries to become one of them by sharing their intimate feelings.

⁶²Samuel Kim. Unfinished Mission, p. 99.

⁶³Ibid.

This openness comes from common problems and standards of living. This is certainly an advantage of Asian missionaries for effective communication with the Thais.

Easy to adjust to
the Thai lifestyle

Asians have greater ease in adjusting to their new situation in Thailand than Westerners. It is easy to adapt to the social level, standards of living, foods, travel, and accommodations. Korean missionaries especially find this particularly easy because of warmer weather, abundant resources, and low prices of necessities. Those raised in rural areas and trained in military service can cope with rigorous life situations and live with lower expenses. In the writer's experience, he has no problem adjusting to their lifestyle either in rural or urban areas, and even in the mountains where the Karen tribes live. He always thanks God for the good accommodations he has had and for the Thai lifestyles.

Easy to concentrate on evangelism
and church planting

(Korean missionaries concentrate on evangelism and church planting because of their experiences and their limited support from home. The nationals often ask missionaries to do some institutional work, but most Asian missionaries have not been trained as specialists at seminary or in their home church. Furthermore, the mission board or home churches do not have enough funds to establish

institutions such as Christian schools or Christian hospitals.

Even though some Korean missionaries started and teach in a seminary in the Philippines, most of them dedicate themselves to evangelism either in rural or urban areas and to church-centered leadership training and church planting, which the local churches need urgently. James Wong summarizes the advantage of Asian missionaries as follows:

Their missionaries will not be locked upon as sources for raising "inter-church aid" and are less likely to be engaged in expensive programs of institutional work. Their limited supply of funds can stimulate their missionaries to concentrate on the essential of missions--evangelism and church planting.⁶⁴

Easy to recognize real response to the Gospel

Thai politeness (as a "social cosmetic") and their mai pen rai attitude make it hard for missionaries to recognize real responses to the Gospel. Especially if Asians received any financial aids or special helps, they seem to respond positively to the Gospel. Even though their minds reject the Gospel, they respond outwardly without sincerity to return the courtesy. Sometimes they confess their faith in Jesus as their Savior to get a scholarship or some other financial aid.

Korean missionaries can tell whether the response to

⁶⁴James Wong, Peter Larson, and Edward Pentecost, "Regional Analysis and Interpretation," in Readings in Third World Missions, ed. Nelson, p. 76.

the Gospel is genuine or not because of their **cultural similarity** and because they **lack** funds for financial help. As Shin explains,

Korean missionaries who are working in Thailand have a disadvantage in short support for special projects, but an advantage to find the real response to the gospel of Thais. ⁵

i

Easy to feel partnership
with humility

Partner relationships between missionaries and nationals is vital to a mission's success. Even Western missionaries try to be partners with the Thais, but the Thais feel unequal and not integrated, because of the missionaries luxurious living, their power and influence, racial and cultural differences and financial power. To some extent, Korean missionaries have **SOME** tendencies to follow the Western missionaries in this respect, but overall the Koreans feel themselves partners with the Thais. And the nationals feel the same about the Koreans more so than with Westerners.

The reasons are not only the similarities as Asian neighbors physically and culturally (see section 1), but there is the Korean attitude toward foreigners as well. Generally Koreans treat foreigners with courtesy, a psychological trait which has developed over a long period of time. They therefore work well with nationals and respect

⁶⁵ Hong Shik Shin, An answer of the questionnaire, "Korean Missionaries to Thailand," 9 May 1984.

them naturally.

Weaknesses

Limited support

Korean churches try to support missionaries and their mission projects. Because of their lack of financial resource and mission experience, however, many churches do not understand the needs of mission fields. They support the missionaries living costs but do not provide much for projects.

At present this situation is better than before, but some missionaries have irregular support for living expenses and most of them have no funds for institutional works or special projects. In Bangkok the rent and educational fee for the missionaries' children are very expensive as foreigners but sponsors tend to compare these costs to those in Korea. Sometimes the number of sponsors decline so much that the missionaries come back to Korea shortly to raise additional support because of economic instability and the people's inconsistent giving.

Discontinuity of work

Many Korean missionary works are not constant because of several reasons as follow:

1. Some missionaries work short terms, move to another field, or leave the fields without success because of lack of support, uncertain calling, or slow growth
2. Some supporting churches change their policy or stop

their support because of a change of pastor or financial priorities

3. Some missions often change their leadership and their policies in a short period; denominational missions, especially, change their board members regularly within three years
4. Some missions begin new works and soon close them or change their policies because of the lack of information, research and training
5. The national church wants to change the missionary's field from resistant to responsive people

These reasons make the field works **inconsistent**.

For example, under the Korea Evangelical Church Mission, Bahk changed the receiving body and left the field within two years, Hong left the field for study furlough within two years, and Song changed the field from Bangladesh to Thailand as well as change his mission affiliation.

Under the Presbyterian Church Mission, Song M.D. left the field within five years without a successor and Choi changed his ministry and left the mission to join the Bible Society.

Even KIM missionaries change their areas and adopt different approaches depending on the missionary's interests and concerns. There is often no connection between a missionary's work and his successor's. Korean missions and missionaries should develop a more effective policy of continuity by sending a team and by maintaining **projects**

despite changing personnel.

Educational problem of the
missionary's children (MK)

MKS of every mission have educational difficulties, but Third World missions have more difficulties than their American counterparts have. Edward Danielson did an excellent study of the MK problem. He listed several options besides MK schools which have been established by mission organizations, specifically for their children.

1. International schools
2. Correspondence or home study
3. Mission schools for nationals
4. Boarding schools in the U.S.
5. Boarding with friends or relatives in the home country
6. Local public schools
7. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) schools
8. Third language schools⁶⁶

Korean missionaries have fewer options to choose from in Thailand. There are international schools in Bangkok and Chiangmai, mission schools for nationals, local public schools, boarding with friends or relatives in Korea or in the U.S., third language schools and MK schools which have been established by other missions in neighboring countries. No correspondence courses have been developed in Korean so far. There are no Korean schools in Thailand, except the Saturday Korean School (2-3 hours), which have been established by the Korean Association in Bangkok.

They have to choose either English speaking schools

⁶⁶Edward E. Danielson, Missionary Kid--MK (Manila: Faith Academy, 1982), p. 51.

or Thai speaking schools. English speaking schools have some advantages such as good facilities, good systems, activities, learning the international mind, and further study in English speaking countries. However, there are some problems such as expensive tuition in comparison to the missionary's living cost, inferiority complex arising from financial and racial peer pressure, and studying in English as a foreign language. Additionally, the only English speaking schools are in Bangkok and Chiangmai.

If they send their children to Thai schools, "their children could establish wholesome relationships with national Christians"⁶⁷ and the missionaries with national parents. However, MK's face a peer pressure from the language barrier and cultural differences. When they want to go to secondary school they have to make the transfer from Thai language and culture to Korean or English.

Korean MK's in Thailand have to struggle with three languages and cultures: Korean, Thai, and English. It makes it hard for them to identify with a nationality and to feel secure about their future. Korean missions have to do more research and try to solve these problems as soon as possible. Until then the parents and children should choose their best option based on their attitude, on what schools are available, on finances, on the ability of the children, on the children's ages, and on mission policy. And above

⁶⁷Ibid.

all they must seek God's will through personal time in prayer and in the Word, along with counsel of other missionaries.⁶⁸

Two Young Churches

Strengths

The churches of both Korea and Thailand face similar issues, schisms and needs, and have similar potentialities. This helps to build their relationship and helps them understand each other.

Similar issues

Asian churches face different issues from those in the West because they are surrounded by a hostile majority. Thai and Korean churches in particular have similar struggles in theology, ethics, social practices, and political situations. Jong Sung Lee summarized the theological problems of the Korean church:

1. The Korean church is very weak in theological training because she concentrates on practical concerns rather than theological ones
2. The Korean church has not resolved the tension between ecumenicity and independence
3. The Korean church depends on foreign theology, either liberal or fundamental-conservative without indigenizing it to Korea
4. The Korean church has not clearly articulated pneumatology, and thus the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is often confused with Shamanism⁶⁹

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 64.

⁶⁹Jong Sung Lee, "100주년과 한국교회" [Centennial Mission and the Korean Church], in 행동하는 찬 [Christian

In reference to point 3, we should note that there has been little effort to develop a **theology** appropriate to an Asian cultural setting. Even though some liberal theologians have developed Min Joong, People's Theology in Korea, and Water Buffalo Theology in Thailand, these were not accepted by evangelical groups nor by most liberals.

There are also few theological texts and commentaries written by Asian theologians. The problem of pneumatology is actually much broader. Syncretism in general is a great problem in the churches of Korea and Thailand, not only with Shamanism, but with Animism, Buddhism, and Confucianism as well. The Korean Church struggled with these issues and developed some approaches which can be shared with Thai Christians but which should be indigenized in Thai soil. In summary, as Saphir P. Athyal concluded his "Towards an Asian Theology":

The Church in Asia, as the Church **anywhere**, has to maintain a healthy tension between belonging to its world and belonging to God, that is to say, between its relevance and its uniqueness, which essentially is the problem of **indigenization**. But belonging to a foreign structure and foreign theology is to be like a plant in a hot-house, secure and comfortable but not related to the soil. But only a life in the **open** field, with the cold of the nights, heat of the days, and the **storms**,⁷⁰ will help the Church grow steadily with deeper roots.

Christian ethics are in conflict with the traditional

in Action] (New York: New York Christian Academy, 1984), pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰Saphir P. Athyal, "Towards an Asian Christian Theology," Asian Perspective 2, 1976, pp. 20-21.

Confucian and Buddhist ethics. It is also often compromised to these non-biblical ethical systems, as shown by the difference in life style in church and in business, the gap in the Charismatic movements and between their claim to spirituality and the ungodliness of their lives and the differences between believing and doing.

There are many social and political issues arising in young churches because of the predominance of other religions. These include conflicts between employers and employees, the compromise of the Christian businessmen with the non-Christian society, the different degrees of social concern in the churches, and the political participation of the church. For example, Bong Rin Ro wrote about the issue of human rights:

The dominant thrust of the ecumenical movement in Asia today is to work for human rights, particularly in countries where human freedom is restricted by the government. The evangelical church must clarify biblical principles on church and state relationships.⁷¹

These kinds of issues are very similar in both Korea and Thailand, so that together the Korean and Thai Churches can share their experiences and can develop answers to these problems in an Asian context.

Similar schisms

The Korean church, as a young church, tends to divide into many denominations easily according to Western

⁷¹Bong Rin Ro, "Five Basic Issues in the Asian Church," Asia Theological News, May 1978, p. 3.

influences, the conflicts of regional emotions, and the personality of the leaders. For example, the Korean church had five or six denominations by 1945, including only one Presbyterian. But the Presbyterians have since divided into fifty-one separate denominations by 1983.⁷² The main reason for schism is the theological differences between the liberal and conservative groups, but most of them were inwardly caused by conflicts among the leaders, regional disharmony or Western influences. Since Pentecostal movements started in Korea there have been many additional schisms in churches, both in urban, and rural areas.

This kind of schism has occurred often not only in Bangkok, but also in other districts in Thailand. Samuel Kim said about transfer growth in his experience in the Thai church:

. . . unfortunately, the denominational missionaries have often caused church divisions, getting involved in sheep stealing and doctrinal disputes among themselves. In many cases the missionaries have not attempted to win Buddhists to Christianity; they recognize, perhaps, that their evangelistic efforts directed toward non-Christian have often been in vain. So they hastily plunge into other Christian flocks looking for "converts." I was often invited by various denominational churches for special conferences: wherever I went I found many persons I had met in gatherings of other denominations. These were "professional Christians" constantly moving around, switching their loyalties from one to another denomination.⁷³

⁷²Jong Sung Lee, "Centennial Mission," p. 4, quoting the statistics of the Research Center of International Religious Affairs in Seoul.

⁷³Samuel Kim, "A Critical Study of the Third World Mission," in New Forces in Mission, ed. David Cho (Seoul: East-West Center for Missions Research and Development,

Korean missionaries understand them well and share their experiences; and so they seek to develop harmony and unity in Christ with each other.

Similar needs

Asian churches have similar basic needs. Ro reiterated what the church leaders from eleven Asian countries said on these needs of the Asian church:

1. Need for grass roots evangelism
2. Lack of leadership (pastors)
3. Lay training
4. **Contextualization**
5. Theological issues such as Asian theology, dialogue with other living religions, and human right⁷⁴

The Thai Church needs evangelism and church planting not only in urban areas but also rural districts. But the main problem is a lack of pastors and lay leadership. The Thai Church needs to know how to mobilize the local churches and Christians to evangelize their own people. By formal theological education and informal leadership training the Thai Church should produce strong church leaders and send them to evangelize and to plant churches in every district where Buddhist temple exist.

The urgent need for leadership is not only for quantity but also for the quality of pastors and lay leaders. The rural churches have a severe lack of pastors, lay leaders, and finances. Another need is therefore to

1976) p. 377.

⁷⁴Bong Rin Ro, "Five Basic Issues," pp. 2-3.

plant strong rural churches and to develop their financial autonomy. Korean missionaries have some experience in these areas and have some models, so that they can share and study needs together as partners.

Similar potentialities

The churches of both Korea and Thailand have many weaknesses which have been described already, but they also have great potentialities as young churches. Korean church growth is very rapid and the Thai church growth has also been very encouraging in the last decade. Samuel H. Moffett said:

Korean Christianity seems to split as fast as it grows. All the larger denominations suffered schisms in the 1950's and most of those divisions remain. Yet rightly or wrongly, the divisions seem to stimulate growth, not hinder it.⁷⁵

That is true in Thai churches as well. Throughout 200 years of Protestant mission history in Asia still the seed of the Gospel has not been sown in the depth of Asian religious minds. If the Gospel penetrates the Asian religious mind, young Asian churches could grow thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and one hundred-fold. We see this potentiality and should prepare new strategies, conduct more profound Asiatic studies, and recruit more Asian missionaries and train them. The Korean Church has a great potential for Asian missions and the Thai Church also has the possibility of sending

⁷⁵Samuel H. Moffett, "The Church in Asia: Getting on the Charts," Christianity Today, October 2, 1981, p. 39.

missionaries to Southeast Asia and near Buddhistic countries in the future; both churches can also be routes to evangelism in China. The Korean Church has many seminaries and dedicated students for cross-cultural missionaries. The Thai Church does not have many students, but Thai Buddhists are eager to dedicate themselves to be Buddhist monks and if they convert to Christianity, they can be potential leaders of the future church.

Weaknesses

As young churches they have some strengths, but they also have many weaknesses such as lack of doctrinal compatibility, lack of training, lack of experience, and lack of financial policies.

Lack of doctrinal compatibility

CCT as a member of WCC has doctrinal differences from KIM. CCT has been influenced by humanistic, secularized and relativistic interpretations and syncretistic aim of Christian missions from Western liberalism. Samuel Kim insisted strongly on the proclamation of an absolute message:

I consider that these tendencies are not only a hazard for western churches and their missionary outreach, but they are a catastrophe for the younger churches in the Third World. This is true because oriental natural religions are all based on relativistic and syncretistic principles. If the Christian mission does not stand firm on the biblical truth and proclaim an absolute message, and if it compromises with Asiatic natural religions on a syncretistic and relativistic basis, then the christian mission will lose its spiritual vitality and will eventually be absorbed into the

indigenous natural religions of Asia.⁷⁶

Since CCT unites many denominations, such as Presbyterian, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and the Lutheran Church, as well as other mission agencies, there is no hindrance to KIM to evangelize and to work in CCT. But while working with them, KIM needs to stress evangelical doctrine and to develop an appropriate evangelistic approach and strong church planting on the basis of the Work of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Lack of training

Very few of the Bible colleges or seminaries offer "missions" as a subject in their curricula. In Korea very few missionary training institutions are training missionary candidates regularly except the East-West Center for Missions Research and Development (EWCMRD). This center has offered the Summer Institute of World Missions (SIWM) yearly since 1973, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics yearly since 1983. In 1980 EWCMRD offered resident programs for missionary candidates of KIM for one or two years before they were to be sent to the field. Most Korean missionaries who are sent do not have the benefit of training except two or four weeks training in SIWM. They lack information on their fields and on cultural differences as well as lacking an understanding of the life and works of a

⁷⁶Samuel Kim, "A Critical Study of the Third World Mission," pp. 379-80.

missionary. "The danger is that as these Asian missionaries find themselves unable to relate cross-culturally, they can become discouraged and unable to make a strong contribution to their work."⁷⁷

Lack of experiences

Korean missions lack experiences in both management and mission relationships with one another because either mission agencies have formed recently or denominational missions have changed board members regularly and lack experts. Marlin L. Nelson and Chaeok Chun suggested the need of specialized training and clear goals:

Missionaries need to learn how to distinguish the gospel from their own culture. They need to know how to teach people to repent of their sins, and believe in Jesus Christ and continue to live as respected and responsible members in their society. This is the key to the establishment of an indigenous church. . . . Missionaries are Christians who are sent across cultural, linguistic geographic, social and religious barriers. They have a vision for the lost and a strategy for evangelism and church multiplication.⁷⁸

These missions often send missionaries wherever they want and then without any accurate research and receiving agencies.

Those missionaries have to decide their field and their mission works without further guidance and counsel of

⁷⁷Larsen, Pentecost, and Wong, "Regional Analysis and Interpretation," p. 79.

⁷⁸Marlin L. Nelson and Chaeok Chun, "An Open Letter to Directors of Asian Mission Societies," in Readings in Third World Missions, ed. Nelson, pp. 139-40.

the mission board and more experience missionaries. Consequently, those who are confronted with government restrictions on cross-cultural adjustments sometimes leave the first country and seek to establish their work at another country. They must then spend additional time in language training and adjusting to the new culture, and are often discouraged by the failure of the first field as are the supporting churches. Korean missions need to research their specific fields and send a trained team to one field. Marlin Nelson and Chaeok Chun suggested Asian missionary bands.

Bands of missionaries should be sent to a few countries. . . . These "bands" of Asian missionaries should go into areas where there are no churches. Then primary activity is then to do evangelism and to incorporate the new believers into newly established indigenous churches. Each new congregation buttresses those already established, provides fellowship, friends, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.⁷⁹

KIM has used this strategy already in Thailand and Indonesia.

Lack of financial policies

Korean churches are strong financially because of the sacrificial giving of Christians and the economic development of the country. These financial resources, however, are used mainly for local church programs and for planting new churches in Korea; they do not contribute enough to the Great Commission because of "local churchism" and denominationalism. Samuel Kim rightly describes this

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 246.

hindrance:

Their greatest hindrance and stumbling blocks for the world mission is local church centered mentalities [local churchism] and over-emphasis of denominationalism.⁸⁰

Consequently financial support for the missionary is irregular and unreliable. Some missionaries withdraw from the field because their main supporting church pastor retires and is replaced by a local church-centered pastor. Some Christians do not support their missionaries consistently because of their low level of commitment and the different emphasis of their churches.

The financial policies of some missions themselves are a great hindrance to effective work. These missions collect mission offerings for missionaries but they misuse large portions of that money for buildings and administrative expenses, while the missionaries are suffering the lack of living allowances and necessities for field work.

This kind of financial policy produces severe tensions and lack of trust between the mission office and supporting churches or individuals. All individuals and groups involved in missions need to develop honest financial policies. The apostle Paul worked day and night to be without blame in his conscience toward God and toward man (Acts 24:16). Paul was not perfect, but he was blameless

⁸⁰Samuel I. Kim, "The Role of Korean Churches in the Development of Third World Missions," Asian Missions Advance, May 1980, p. 11.

especially concerning the use of money. Missionaries, missions, and supporting churches need to be equally blameless in their financial policies.

Missionaries should maintain a healthy relationship with their mission and supporters. They need to report their financial income and expenses clearly to the mission and major supporters. If someone sends a missionary a designated gift it should be used for that project correctly. Prayer letters and personal letters should be sent to sponsors regularly.

The mission office should have a good reputation especially in areas of financial policy and **administration**. Supporting churches and individuals have to commit themselves to the Lord and to the **mission**; not for the sake of their reputations, but for the glory of God and the souls of the lost.

Church Models

Missionaries' home church backgrounds are very important for their ministry in mission fields. **Koreans** have good church models and are experienced within those models. The Korean Church is indigenous, growing **and** reaching out at home and overseas.

Strengths

Indigenous church models

The Korean Church has been a unique indigenous church from the beginning. When the first missionaries came

to Korea, there were Korean Christians, a church, and even some portions of scripture. Samuel Kim delivered an area report to the All-Asia Mission Consultation, Seoul, 1973.

The first Korean Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, were converted by themselves, even before the Western missionaries came. In other words, the Western missionaries found that the early Korean Christians came to be by their decision--even without any missionaries proselytizing. Some said that when the first missionaries arrived in Seoul in 1884, there were already at least 100 Christians who welcomed them. The Western missionaries exclaimed with joy that they had come to sow the seed but they could reap the harvest instead. Miraculous Christian movements among the Korean people have been repeated in history continually until today.⁸¹

Baptized Korean Christians translated portions of the Bible in Manchuria and in Japan as follows:

In 1874 Eung Chan Lee started to translate the New Testament with John Ross, a Scottish missionary in Manchuria. After that Hong Joor. Baik, Sung Ha Lee, and Jin Ki Kim came to Woo Chang, Manchuria from Euiju, Korea and were the first baptized Korean Christians. . . . In Japan Soo Jung Lee, who was an assistant to the special ambassador, Young Hyo Park, was baptized and began translating the New Testament into Korean. One year after Allen [the first (medical) missionary to Korea, 1884] came to Korea, the first ordained missionaries, Underwood and Apenzella, had learned the Korean language from Soo Jung Lee and brought the Korean Bible with them [in Easter, 1885].⁸² That is very unique in the history of World Missions.

In 1890, John L. Nevius visited Korea and gave advice on basic methods of building a responsible church. His principles and methods were largely responsible for the

⁸¹Samuel T. Kim, "Area Report: Korea," pp. 126-27.

⁸²"Editorial." ft^^/fo^ [Hankook Daily in Chicago], August 18, 1984, translated by Jung Woong Kim.

extraordinary success of Presbyterian missions in Korea.⁸³

Beyerhaus and Lefever gave early statistics for the Korean church:

The Northern Presbyterian Church was the largest group, and, by 1906, it maintained forty-six ordained missionaries and thirteen doctors. In that year their Korean Christians had not yet produced a single ordained pastor, but they had 140 unordained evangelists and nearly 200 teachers and Bible-women. There were 843 congregations with 56,943 members, although only 14,353 members were regular communicants.⁸⁴

Beyerhaus and Lefever explained the two policies of the

Mission Board of the American Presbyterian Church:

From the beginning the chief aim of these Presbyterian Missions was the founding of an indigenous Church. . . . First, the autonomy of the church is subordinate to the central aim of evangelism. . . . Secondly, evangelism does not consist merely in establishing contact between Christ and the individual soul, but ought to show its effect in the whole life of human society--a remarkably 'modern' conception of Mission.⁸⁵

Beyerhaus and Lefever summarize the Nevius method as

follows:

1. Missionary personal evangelism through wide itineration
2. Self-propagation, with every believer a teacher of someone and a learner from someone else better equipped than himself
3. Self-government, with every group under its own chosen but unpaid leaders; circuits under their own paid helpers who will later give place to pastors; circuit meetings training the people for later district, provincial and national leadership

⁸³Peter Beyerhaus and Henry Lefever, The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 90.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁵Ibid.

4. Self-support, with all places of Worship provided by the believers, each group as soon as founded beginning to pay towards the circuit-helper's salary; even schools to receive only a partial subsidy, and no pastors of single congregations to be provided for by foreign funds
5. Systematic Bible-study for every believer under his group-leader and circuit-helper; and for every leader and helper in the Bible-Classes conducted by the missionaries
6. Strict discipline, enforced by biblical sanctions
7. Cooperation and union with other bodies, or at least territorial division
8. Non-interference in private law-suits or any such matters
9. General helpfulness on the part of the missionaries, where possible, in the economic problems of the people⁸⁶

The Korean Church willingly accepted and based their own church's emphasis on the Nevius method, and cooperated well with the missionaries. Korean Christians have depended upon God rather than missionaries for church growth. "Korean Christians have always made clear their belief that it was God who gave the increase; the growth was catalytic and continuing. Some confidently predict that Korea will soon be a Christian nation."⁸⁷

The Thai Church needs this kind of indigenous church model in order to win the nationalistic Thai people and to grow churches. Korean missionaries can share not only their concepts but also the experiences of their home church, such as the sacrifice and enthusiasm of pastors, the commitment of all Christians to tithes and other offerings, and the use of lay people as Bible teachers and evangelistic resources.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 91-92.

⁸⁷Moffett, "Church in Asia," p. 39.

Church growth models

Joon Gon Kim presented Korean church growth models at one of the plenary evening meetings of the Asian Leaders' Conference on Evangelism in Singapore, November 1978.

Six new churches everyday in Korea? Is it not every year? It is impossible to believe it. Yes, it is impossible with men but it is certainly possible when the people of God depend on the power of the Holy Spirit and faithfully witness to others. . . . The Korean field is white and the harvest is ready. Indeed, the wind of the Holy Spirit is blowing and the season of Christ has come to this land. Korean youth see visions and Korean old men dream dreams.⁸⁸

Nelson provided statistics of major denominations and the total number of Protestants which has continued to double each decade since 1940 as shown in Table 1 and 2.⁸⁹

TABLE 4

THE NUMERICAL GROWTH OF CATHOLICS
AND PROTESTANTS. SINCE 1940

Year	Catholic	Protestant
1940	150,000	372,000
1950	257,668	600,000
	(estimate due to war)	
1960	365,968	1,257,428
1970	839,711	2,197,421
1980	1,321,293	5,809,417
1981	1,439,000	7,637,000

SOURCE: Nelson, "Korea," p. 15 and David Lee, "Missionary Training Program," p. 51.

⁸⁸Joon Gon Kim, "Six New Churches Everyday: Korean Church Growth," Asian Perspective 17, p.1.

⁸⁹Marlin L. Nelson, "Korea: Asia's First Christian" Asia Theological News, July-September 1982, p. 15.

TABLE 5

THE NUMERICAL GROWTH OF IMPORTANT PROTESTANT
DENOMINATIONS IN THE LAST DECADE

Denomination	Churches		Constituency	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Tong-Hap Presbyterian	2,348	3,691	532,020	960,402
Hap-Dong Presbyterian	1,920	3,638	499,540	1,240,719
Koshin Presbyterian	537	673	106,552	190,000
Christ Presbyterian	680	871	200,000	230,000
Methodist	1,418	2,291	300,388	675,751
Korean Evangelical	590	1,149	150,000	374,500
Salvation Army	98	164	40,150	66,671
Nazarene	70	145	12,155	46,870
Baptist	404	708	65,959	196,450
Seventh Day Adventist	244	366	34,969	46,691
Assemblies of God	107	429	25,500	336,750

SOURCE: Nelson, "Korea," p. 15.

The early growth of the church was purified and quickened by the Great Korean Revival of 1907-1908. The General Council of Churches issued the slogan, "The Million Souls Movement" in 1909 and 1910. Beyerhaus and Lefever stated this movement as follows:

It is estimated that during this campaign, 100,000 'preaching days' were donated. Almost every Korean home was visited, 700,000 copies of the Gospel and a million tracts were distributed all over the country. Unfortunately, the result, expressed in figures, did not come up to expectations. The only positive effect seems to have been an inner strengthening of the church itself, rather than expansion of the church among the non-Christian people. One reason for this failure was very probably the national disaster in the conquest of Korea by Japan in 1910.⁹⁰

One of the crucial elements that has contributed to church growth is the total Christianization movement. Mammoth

⁹⁰Beyerhaus and Lefever, The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission, p. 100.

crusades have been conducted continually in this movement such as the Billy Graham Crusade (1973), Explo '74 of Campus Crusade for Christ (1974), the 1977 Korean Evangelistic Crusade, the 1980 World Evangelization Crusade, and the Centennial Celebration Crusade (1984). At present the Korean Church has planned the '88 Evangelism Olympic Crusade (1988) based on the Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea.

Joon Gon Kim gave statistics by collecting 1,000 church bulletins in July 1974 and in July 1975, one year after Explo '74.

The results show a 33% increase in church attendance and a 64% increase in church offerings. This means the Korean church increased by one million people one year after Explo '74.⁹¹

What are the basic reasons for the growth of Korean churches? Nelson, a missionary to Korea, listed both spiritual and non-spiritual reasons based on his missionary experiences of more than twenty years.

(1) Continuing providence of God (1 Cor. 3:6, 7); (2) increasing devotion in prayer; (3) new desire for Bible study; (4) zealous witnessing by lay people; (5) **evangelistic**, biblical preaching; (6) stewardship of money, time, and talents; (7) fear of another Communist invasion; (8) economic hardships; (9) openness to the gospel; (10) ministry of chaplains among policemen, industrial workers, students, military, prisoners, etc; (11) vitality and growth of the number of cell groups; (12) **establishment** of many daughter (branch) churches; (13) more affluent society increases money available for church work; (14) no strong opposition from a national or traditional religion; (15) evangelism and disciple making by para-church **organization**; (16) vision to see Korea become a Christian nation; and (17) sense of **calling** (like Israel) to become the people of God to

⁹¹Joon Gon Kim, "Six New Churches Everyday," p. 5.

evangelize Asia and the world.⁹²

According to the criteria of J. Robertson McQuilkin, David Lee described the growth of the Korean Church as a healthy church as follows:

The Korean church has not only grown in numbers, but also in such areas as leadership strength, reproductivity, the training of its members, financial availability, prayer, and the ability to send out its members for missions.⁹³

Thai Church leaders are eager to see the Korean Church and to learn about what is happening in Korean Christians. Korean missionaries could share their experiences and arrange church growth seminars in Korea for the Thai leaders as they already have done annually since 1977. These seminars will be discussed in the following chapter.

Church planting models

In Korea, most churches have their church planting projects at home and various denominations have a campaign to plant five to ten thousand churches. The Haptong Presbyterian Denomination alone established 1,200 churches between 1976 (2,484 churches) and 1978 (3,684 churches). Their membership has almost doubled over this period of time, from 680,000 to 1,100,000. This growth started with

⁹²Nelson, "Korea," p. 14.

⁹³David Tai Woong Lee, "A Missionary Training Program for University Students in South Korea," D. Miss. major project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1983, p. 52.

launching a 10,000 New Churches planting project.⁹⁴ For example the Young Rak Presbyterian Church in Seoul alone has planted over two hundred new churches in the thirty-six years of its existence.⁹⁵

The Mok Po First Presbyterian Church has planned a church planting project while she has partially supported four missionary couples. The pastor, Il Nam Kim, the writer's father, has planned a thirty year project starting in 1976 as follows:

- 1976-1985: Planting one church per year
- 1986-1995: Planting one church per month
- 1996-2005: Planting one church per day or one church per member's family⁹⁶

It has worked as he planned up to the present. One of these planting church techniques is sending and supporting an assistant pastor to start a Sunday afternoon school at a potential area until it grows enough to start full time

⁹⁴Joon Gon Kim, "Six New Churches," p. 3.

⁹⁵David Lee, "Missionary Training Program," p. 56.

⁹⁶Interview with Il Nam Kim, the Mok Po First Presbyterian Church, Mok Po, Korea, 10 June 1980. This church was established in the inner city of Mok Po, located in southwest Korea, in 1953. The writer asked him about the possibility of planting a church for each family. He said they have three choices: first of all, the family may dedicate one member to be pastor, then he will plant a church. Secondly, all family members may support a new church financially and with prayer. Thirdly, the head of family or each member may dedicate himself to be a reproductive Christian, then the whole family can be the core of a new church. His idea came from his mother's descendants. When she was ninety years of age, she had over 100 descendants (including spouses) with four elders and eight ordained pastors, four of them studying at the doctoral level in the U.S.A. and Switzerland.

ministry as a self-supporting church.

Planting churches in Korea is not a hard project for either church or for seminary graduates. Haptong seminary in Seoul encourages every graduate to plant new churches, both urban and rural, by faith in God and by the power of the Holy Spirit. This experience of planting churches might be helpful for ministry in Thailand.

Mission minded church models

From the beginning the Korean church has encouraged missionary endeavors.

As early as 1907, the churches in Korea had already started to send out their missionaries to Cheju Island. In 1908, right after they ordained the first seven ministers, they did not hesitate to send two of them to Japan as missionaries. . . . The year of 1912 . . . the Christians in Korea gathered together and organized their first General Assembly and also decided to send three missionary families to Shantung, China. The missionary vision of the Korean Church was realized by sending three missionary couples to China in 1913. Since then, the Korean Churches have sent a good many missionaries continually to China, Japan and Manchuria. . . . In 1956, the Korean Church began to send two missionary couples to Thailand and to other parts of the world. . . . Even before they were restored from the destruction of the war and from poverty, they sent many full-time missionaries to various places.⁹⁷

In 1982, 323 missionaries were working in 37 countries including 180 diaspora missionaries. (Except North America).⁹⁸

The Korean Church must be a missionary base to reach Asian countries as well as the other parts of the world. Numerous

⁹⁷Samuel Kim, "Area Report: Korea," pp. 123-24.

⁹⁸Nelson, Directory of Korean Missionaries and Mission Societies, p. 62.

denominational and interdenominational missions have sprouted up in the last two decades and at least three important missionary training centers,⁹⁹ the East-West Center (EWCMRD), the Asian Center for Theological Studies and Missions, and the Church Growth Institute, have been established. "The Korean Churches and missions are regarded by some missiologists as a `miracle of modern missions."¹⁰⁰

The Korean Church publicly moved from being a missionary receiving church to a sending one at the '80 World Evangelization Crusade (WEC) in Seoul, Korea. Nell L. Kennedy reported about WEC:

. . . the basic stress was on missions. Kim¹⁰¹ issued a call for 100,000 missionaries from Korea to serve in other countries by 1984, the centennial: a thousand missionaries for every year of Protestant Christianization effort in Korea. Ten thousand university students, along with 3,000 high school students, committed to this goal. He called on the nation's parents to give up their sons and daughters, releasing them to accelerate fulfillment of the Great Commission.

"The missionary may be either short- or long-term," Kim said, explaining the envisioned inclusive effort to cause every believer, whatever his field of interest, to reach one and teach one. Part of the thrust involves sending teams of youth to enroll in universities in nations with little or no Christian witness, such as

⁹⁹These centers are training missionary candidates and national leaders of both Korea and other Asian countries.

¹⁰⁰Samuel Kim, "Area Report: Korea," p. 126.

¹⁰¹Joon Gon Kim, Crusade Chairman, is the founder and President of Korean Campus Crusade for Christ, and was the Crusade Chairman of the CCC Explo '74 which trained over 300,000 Christians for Korea Evangelism.

China and Japan.¹⁰²

Kim has planned and is developing a correspondence school, Korea Bible Studies (KBS), to provide high quality biblical education almost equal to that of a seminary graduate. The goal is to establish one million small group Bible studies (KBS) and to train 100,000 volunteers as self-supporting missionaries as Christian service corps workers.¹⁰³ Another encouraging factor for mission is the strong commitment of many local churches.

For example, Nam-Seoul Presbyterian Church, one of the writer's main supporting churches, was established in the Southern Seoul apartments area in July 1975. Pastor Jung Kil Hong started with one deacon's family, his friend's family, and two women by teaching them Bible in the deacon's living room and making disciples. After two months they started a new church at another apartment area, even though they had no church building and were not very strong themselves. In September 1976 they rented a third story hall for their worship service, and their number increased to almost 100 members. They obeyed the Great Commission by sending the writer's family to Thailand with their unceasing prayer and major financial support. In 1985, the pastor trained 134 lay leaders to teach their own Bible study

¹⁰²Nell L. Kennedy, "Troubled South Korea Managed a Very Big Bash for Missions," Christianity Today, September 19, 1980, p. 44.

¹⁰³Joon Gon Kim, "Home Studies Train Lay Leaders," AsiaTheological News, January-March 1982, pp. 14, 19.

groups every Friday for two hours. They have sent twelve missionary couples to Thailand, Brazil, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, and to Vietnamese in the U.S.A. in cooperation with other churches or organizations.¹⁰⁴

Hong's vision for the church budget is to spend 70 percent of their annual income for the mission and outreach programs outside the church.¹⁰⁵ The church's concern can be found in her annual budgets of 1984 and 1985 in Table 6. We are convinced that the Korean Church is the most missionary minded church in Asia and has a great number of potential missionaries and their supporters. But there also are some weaknesses.

Weaknesses

Easy to emphasize Korean Church styles

Mayers said two different cultural approaches in his book:

The monocultural approach to the behavior of others is to see in what ways that behavior is understandable to the one viewing it and how it can be changed to conform to the expectations of the one viewing it. The crosscultural or bicultural approach lets man be man and God be God in evaluating behavior. . . . A truly bicultural individual can introduce the Gospel in any culture or subculture without the accompanying "cultural baggage" that is potential for enslavement of the person and falsification of precept or truth.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Jung Kil Hong, Nam-Seoul Presbyterian Church Directory (Seoul: Nam-Seoul Presbyterian Church, 1985), pp. 7-8, 150 and interviewed with Hong, Seoul, Korea, 18 August 1981.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁰⁶Marvin K. Mayers, Christianity Confronts Culture

TABLE 6.

NAM-SEOUL CHURCH'S ANNUAL EXPENDITURE
(PROPOSED)

Expense	1984		1985	
Within Church	\$202,942.50	(37%)	\$241,020.00	(38%)
Educational	94,250.00	(17%)	94,577.50	(14%)
Missions	182,400.00	(34%)	266,717.50	(41%)
Emergency	62,787.50	(12%)	43,185.00	(7%)
Total	\$542,250.00	(100%)	\$655,500.00	(100%)

SOURCE: Hong, Church Directory, p. 37

Many Korean missionaries are tempted to emphasize the Korean Church as the model of church growth and biblical Christianity. This trend comes from their pride in Korean Church growth and their lack of cross-cultural understanding. It is very easy for Korean missionaries to emphasize Korean church styles, such as early morning prayer, fasting prayer, mammoth evangelism, the Nevius method, the charismatic authority of pastors, Liturgy, and church administrations. In some countries they emphasize Korean Presbyterian denominations and theological education and have started new denominations and seminaries without adequate research and resources. This produces disharmony with the existing national churches and gives a bad reputation for future work.

The Korean Church has accepted willingly Western styles and cultural baggage with the Gospel, including hymnals, church architecture and educational systems. But

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 242-43.

the Thais have a very strong **nationalistic** mentality and an independent mindset, so the Korean **monocultural** approach might be a mistake in this field and **might** cause **the** growth of anti-Korean groups in the future.

Korean missionaries should be humble under God and under nationals, and must be careful to distinguish the biblical absolute truths from the cultural baggage. They need wisdom to preach the real Gospel without the hindrance of Korean styles. Korean missionaries, John Hong, **Byung** Hwa Yang, and Eun Moo Lee have pointed out this weakness in their **questionnaires**. (See Appendix III.)

Easy to be discouraged
by slow growth

Many Korean missionaries who have a background of rapid church growth can tend to start new projects in a hurry and anticipate fruitful results. But the Thai Church's responses and their character are quite opposite from the Korean's. Their attitudes are cha cha (slowly slowly), cai yen yen (cool heart, don't hurry) and mai pen rai (never mind). They have never seen an example of a rapidly growing church. Fortunately, they are beginning to see a few growing charismatic churches in Bangkok.

Both missionaries and supporting churches cannot understand the situations of the field enough and are discouraged and want to change **something** to get results in a short period. This attitude makes many missionaries change fields or start and concentrate on a diaspora **church** with

Korean residents in their fields.¹⁰⁷ Most of these Koreans respond well to the Gospel and are the main financial resources for their missionary living allowance and some of the mission's expenditures. It also makes the nationals feel discouraged about the Korean's hurry and their change in focus from nationals to Koreans.

The missionaries should try to understand field situations and needs, and develop new strategies to reach specific peoples. It is not necessary that missionaries compare the national church and the Korean church; rather, the need of each field is to recognize their uniqueness.

Easy to Neglect Contextualization

To communicate the Gospel attractively into the context of the Thais is tremendously important. The missionary should try with great sensitivity to eliminate all possible barriers to the acceptance of the Gospel.

Charles Taber said of the true spirit of contextualization:

Contextualization . . . is the effort to understand and take seriously the specific context of each human group and person on its own terms and in all its dimensions--cultural, religious, social, political, economic--and to discern what the Gospel says to people in that context. This requires a profound empirical analysis of the context in place of flip or a priori judgments. . . . Contextualization tries to discover in the Scriptures what God is saying to these people. In other words, contextualization takes very seriously the example of Jesus in the sensitive and careful way he offered each

¹⁰⁷John Hong, Korean missionary to Thailand, points out about 70 percent of Korean missionaries spend their time and energy for Korean residents in his questionnaire.

person a gospel tailored to his or her own context.¹⁰⁸

But Roland Allen long ago described the **Westernization** of church leadership as follows:

The more independent spirits amongst them can find no opportunity for exercising their gifts. All authority is concentrated in the hands of the missionary. If a native Christian feels any capacity for Christian work, he can only use his capacity under the direction, and in accordance with the wishes, of that supreme authority. He can do little in his own way; that is, in the way which is natural to him.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, many Korean missionaries experienced **this** model of Western missionaries who have all authority in their hands. The Korean Church also does not understand **contextualization** rightly because a few **liberal** theologians introduced the theory of **contextualization**, the evangelicals are against it as a part of liberal theology. Furthermore, because the Thai Church has grown very slowly it is easy for the missionaries to insist that the Korean style doctrines are the **best** theology for church growth rather than **contextualizing** them for the Thais.

Korean missionaries **must** carefully **contextualize** the Gospel for the Thais. They need to be aware of:

1. The absolute truths of the biblical revelation
2. The Greco-Roman-Hebrew background of biblical culture
3. [Their] own cultural background.

¹⁰⁸ Charles R. Taber, "Contextualization: Indigenization and/or Transformation," quoted in Phil Parshal, New Paths in Muslim Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 81.

4. The target culture.¹¹⁰

Korean missionaries in Thailand have several advantages since they come from a growing young church with similar issues and needs. The Thai Church can particularly benefit from Korean Church growth models if contextualized appropriately to Thai society. But Korean missionaries also have many barriers due to lack of doctrinal development, training, experience, and wise financial policies. They are learning by doing and have great potential for Asian evangelization.

Having explained the key factors affecting the attitudes of Thais and four Thai church and Western mission relationships, this chapter has surveyed the four Korean mission works and the strengths and weaknesses of Korean missions in Thailand. How do we develop an effective relationship between KIM and CCT given these backgrounds?

¹¹⁰"Findings Committee Report" in New Horizons in World Mission, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 240.

CONCLUSION

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. . . ."¹

Through Jesus' disciples, faithful men and women who followed them, and the dedicated Western missionaries who were obeying this Great Commission, the Gospel came to Korea and Thailand. Now the Third World Churches including Korea and Thailand must obey the Great Commission themselves by developing their roles as members of the Body of Christ.

In this Project, the writer surveyed the Thai context and Western and Korean missions in Thailand. These three elements must be taken into account if KIM is to develop an effective relationship with the CCT.

KIM should learn from Western missions and missionaries as well as from Thai Christians: it must help the Thai Church by understanding and nurturing them. Together drawing on their individual experiences, KIM and the CCT must develop church-planting strategies and model churches appropriate to the Thai context. Then, the Thai Church will expand their leadership training programs, home cell groups and church planting activities in their own ways

¹Matt. 28:19-20 (NIV).

and reproduce their churches through **inter-District** church planters and intertribal and international missionaries.

Although a complete discussion is beyond **the** immediate scope of this project, several other elements are needed for these ideas to be implemented **successfully**. The CCT and KIM should develop indigenous Thai materials for **disciplemaking**, home cell groups in every village, lay-shepherd training, and church planting, in concise and reproducible forms.

Above all, this **UNDER** relationship can be developed only by planning with prayer, with God's faithful servants obeying the Holy Spirit, and growing in their personal intimacy with each other in the love of **God**.

The Thai Church has real potential for growth and for planting indigenous churches in the **last** decade of the twentieth century despite many obstacles. The Thais and Korean missionaries are limited in many areas, but they are working together not only in their strengths but also in the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit. ". . . **Not** by might nor by power, but by my **Spirit**," says the **Lord Almighty**."²

²Zech. 4:6 (NIV).