EDWIN ZEHNER:

CHURCH GROWTH AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP : THREE EXAMPLES FROM THE THAI CHURCH

CHURCH GROWTH AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP:

THREE EXAMPLES FROM THE THAI CHURCH

by

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MH 520 Historical Development
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See A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, inside.

A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

This paper is meant to be complete in **itself,** but it is also **a stepping** stone in an ongoing learning experience that should lead **to** the completion of my Ph.D. dissertation **in** late **1988.** Much of the data and analysis reported hern is likely to reappear in **that** report.

Therefore, I **request** your assistance in correcting and/ or **amplifying** data, and in **suggesting improvements** and pointing out weak points in the analysis. Any and all contributions will be **greatly** appreciated, even if they are not directly incorporated or responded to.

Responses from Thai church leaders and **from missionaries** would bo **especially appreciated.** Even a **mere correction** of **a** date, name, or figure could be useful in the future.

Write before **mid-May 1988** to:

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Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly thirty years ago, William Smalley observed that "the [three-self] criteria of 'self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating' are not necessarily diagnostic of an indigenous movement." (1979:32) Not only do churches develop indigeneity independent of formal programs, but the three-self concept itself is a projection "of our American value systems into the idealization of the church, (in) that they are in their very nature Western concepts based upon Western ideas of individualism and power." (1979:35) When the church does become truly indigenous, suggests Smalley, "often missionaries do not like the product." (1979:36)

Recent church history includes many examples of strong, growing Christian movements that have structured their leadership patterns along indigenous lines. Prime examples include Pentecostal churches in Latin America.(Vaughn 1984: 209-260; Wagner 1973; Read and Johnson Mont-rfosso, 1969), and churches in Korea (cf. Cho 1979:145) and Singapore (Hinton 1985   ), all of whom have developed systems guided by authoritative leaders which mirror the patterns used in secular society. Other examples include the various Independent Churches

in Africa, whose charismatic leaders operate a somewhat different system uniquely appropriate to the peoples of that continent (Ray 1976:193-217; Turner 1967; Barrett 1968). By contrast, the fast-growing Methodist and Baptist sects on the early American frontier seemed to have leadership structures more in line with the egalitarian democratic ideals of their socio-cultural context (Sweet ???).

It could be suggested, in fact, that culturally appropriate leadership patterns such as these should be expected in roost instances where the church is growing, whether the patterns* development is planned or merely fortuitous. While a particular leadership pattern in itself cannot generate growth, effective leaders in any culture can be expected to operate within the expectations which the members of that society hold for the behavior of their leaders. Otherwise they would not be able to gather and retain followers. Thus, culturally appropriate leadership patterns should be a necessary (but probably not sufficient) condition for sustained church growth in any society.

This paper contains case studies of three individuals who had a special impact on the history of the Thai church. One was an American missionary, while the other two are Thai. One is widely honored as one of the forefathers of the Thai church, while the other two remain surrounded by controversy. All three started new movements, attracted foreign attention and assistance, and, most important, were effective in drawing around themselves a core of loyal people committed to

them and their work. In these studies we will note how the
leadership styles rf each fit the cultural expectations of
his day, and how that fit contributed to his effectiveness.

The careers of these three together cover over a : ... \
hundred years of cultural change in a modernizing society.
To lay the groundwork, then, we look first to the anthro-
pological literature for general patterns of leader-client
relations in Thai society. Then for each leader we will note
his more specific cultural context, outline his accomplish-
ments, and analyze the leadership patterns that made him
effective in that context. In the summary we will note
some other organizations that seem to be building similar
factors into their work in Thailand. The leader-oriented
structures that we will see emerging have great potential for
building periods of growth, but we will see that they can
generate their own conflicts as well.

The three leaders studied include:

(1) Dr. Daniel McGilvary

Dr. McGilvary opened the first station of the Laos[1]
(North Thailand) Mission of the American Presbyterians
in Chiengmai in April 1867. At his death in 1911, the Lao
Presbytery numbered nearly 5000 members, or more than 80%
of all the Protestants in Siam. Here we examine the period
of the Presbytery's most rapid growth (measured by percen-

tage increase of total baptized members over previous year), extending from 1877 to 1895.

(2) Rev. Boonmark Gittisarn

Boonmark began as an evangelist, then became Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Bangkok, and an officer of the Church of Christ in Thailand from its formal establishment in 1934 until his resignation in 1948. He then founded a new local congregation, astarted a loose association of "free" Thai churches, and still later helped spearhead the introduction of Pentecostal teaching into mainline Thai churches. Still later he attempted to bring his independent association into the United Pentecostal ("Jesus Only") Church, and became a UPC leader for a time before disappearing from the Thai leadership scene in his final days. Here we are interested in Boonmark's activities until the early 1960s, when he became involved with the UPC.

(3) Rev. Dr. ███████████

Dr. █████████ founded the Hope of Bangkok Church in 1981 as a base from which to develop a new nationwide indigenous church-planting force. Thailand Bible Seminary opened on church premises in 1985, and the first daughter church was planted that same year. By October 1987 ██████'s churches claimed a nationwide membership approaching 3500. The combined average attendance of the   congregations

totaled over 1500, including some 1000 in Bangkok alone.

Hope of Bangkok, the flagship church, became the largest

single Protestant congregation in Thailand in just its

first five years.

The leader-centric structures that each of these three

men operated in the periods studied fit Thai cultural norms

for leadership, and have great potential for channeling

spurts of growth in any particular leader's organization.

As we will see later, such leadership patterns may also

have limitations when it comes to institutionalizing per-

sonal charisma in enduring organizations, and it seems that

effective leaders in such systems tend to generate some of

the fiercest opposition among their closest peers. Never-

theless, the cultural expectations that made these men ef-

fective should not be ignored, and Christian leaders in

Thailand who learn from their example should benefit thereby.

CLIENTELE STRUCTURES IN THAI SOCIETY

Lucien M. Hanks (1968) has pictured Thai social struc-

as a series of unintegrated chains linked together at their

head. An individual in society, say, a peasant farmer in his

village, tends to be oriented less towards egalitarian

relations with other farmers than towards hierarchical

relations with his social unequals. As a result, coopera-

tive action by villagers in, say, improving local irrigation, is most easily accomplished by the intervention of mutual superiors. Chains of these hierarchical personal relations extend throughout society. Each link in the chain is a dyadic relationship between a patron and his client. Chains tend not to cooperate with each other except as a result of relations between the patrons at the tops of the chains.

Hanks' chain metaphor is one way of describing the patron-client systems patterning personal relations in Thai society. Such systems, common in modernizing peasant societies (Wolf 1966a; 1966b), are described in the sociological literature as comprising

> a network of hierarchically linked face-to-face dyadic relationships between people who are unequal in status, wealth, and influence. These relationships are solidi-fied in large part through continuing flows downward of material and other benefits, in return for defer-ence and services. (Deyo 1978?69)

It is the exchange of goods, services, and favors on a personalized basis that keeps the system running, although nothing in the exchange is explicitly formalized. A patron may provide his client jobs, connections with government officials, access to special personal opporunities, gifts, and the marks of status that allow the inferior to streng-then his position with his own followers. All is provided on the basis of friendship, as a demonstration of the super-ior's personal magnanimity. The inferior may respond with his own gifts and favors, but he is rarely able to fully repay his patron's generosity.

Akin Rabibhadana noted how these exchanges of personal

favors cemented the patron-client bonds among <u>nakleng</u> (informal powerbrokers) in a Bangkok slum (1975a). At the beginning of Akin's study, two major clientele groups dominated the slum's power structure. Each leader held his followers to himself with an ongoing stream of favors they could not repay, thereby building a moral debt of <u>bunkhun</u> (a trait of meritorious magnanimity possessed by the giver) which receivers felt morally bound to repay by fidelity, loyal support, and other sacrifices. In Akin's slum, each leader avoided accepting favors from the other, to avoid developing the inferior's sense of moral obligation to the other. In fact, it was the acceptance of such a favor that (temporarily) united the two groups under a single leader, when his superior contacts outside the slum enabled him to provide a service not otherwise available to his counterpart. The leader performing the favor thereby gained a superior relationship to what had been an opposing clique, by coopting its leader as a subordinate (See Figure I.).

The one-to-one patron-client dyads underlying such systems are marked by a fundamental impermanence. Hanks and Phillips note (1960:642) that the personal links constantly change and require "continuous validation" through the patron's responsiveness to his inferiors' needs. The superior helps cement the relationship with downward flows of material and other services, while the inferior preserves

FIGURE I

EXPANDING CLIENTELE BY CO-OPTING A LEADER

(based on Akin 1975a)

B performs a

favor that A

cannot repay
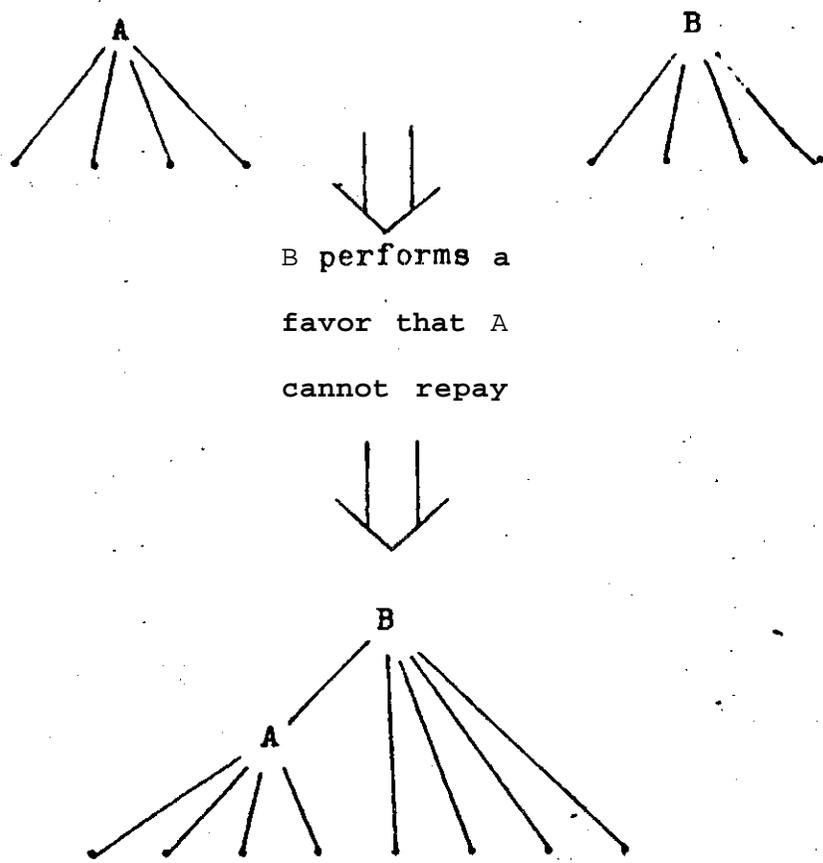
access to his benefactor through deference, personal ser-
vices without charge (or at reduced charge) to the patron
and other members of his entourage, and a responsiveness
to the superior's wishes that Hanks and Phillips term
"obedient service." (Hanks and Phillips 1960:654; Deyo
1978:69)

In a 1983 study in Central New York (van Esterik and
Zehner 1983) it was found that Lao refugees there had es-
tablished new clientele systems to manage adjustment to the
host community. Yet as the fieldworkers mapped out the ex-
changes of goods and services which flowed along these
clientele networks, we noticed that the participants them-
selves rarely if ever thought in terms of quid pro quo
exchanges among themselves. When I naively asked a dominant
regional patron what if anything he received in return from
those he helped, he said he received nothing. He was al-
2
ways the generous giver, he said. Most members of his
clique shared th?t perception, eagerly seeking his advice,
and material assistance. On the other hand, a once subor-
dia.te leader beginning to distance himself accused this
patron of favoritism towards friends and relatives, and
refused to participate in a community-wide project being
organized by friends of the major patron..

Thus, although the assumptions along which relationships
were structured were not explicitly voiced, yet they guided
the way in which one one related to various friends, with
each manipulating the system to maximize personal advantage.
For example, we saw patrons attempting to create a public

image of equal accessibility to all potential clients, while privately favoring only the most loyal and dependable. Clients, for their part, often sought to maximize independence by approaching several different patrons for services, even while maintaining a primary relationship with a single patron.

While all of these relationships are negotiated individually, the links function collectively as the basis of group action. Hanks (1975) suggests analyzing the resulting action structures as "entourages" and "circles." The entourage he describes as "the face-to-face group of a man and his clients." It is based on the prowess of the leader at its center, and survives only as long as he can continue providing advantage for his clients. Because the entourage is based on personal relationships, the weakening of the patron's personal position in society brings a regrouping of the entourage members around other leaders (1975:200-201), although entourages reinforced by factors such as kinship or a leader's personal charisma can sometimes survive extended periods of material adversity (see, for example, Hanks and Phillips 1960:642).

The circle, suggests Hanks, consists of the central entourage plus the personal entourages and contacts of each of its subordinate members. This circle constitutes the total group of people who would respond to a command or request from the center. To illustrate the potential responsiveness of these loosely-structured circles, when the

former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces recently re-
turned unannounced from an overseas visit, hundreds were
on hand to greet him at the airport with signs, gifts, and
other expressions of support, even though many of them had
never met the General personally. Their availability on
such short notice illustrates the efficiency with which
the entourage-and-circle system can mobilize resources
by means of clients calling on clients, who call on the.ir
own clients.

A number of scholars have suggested that clientele
systems even shape the informal functioning of complex
bureaucracies such as the national government administration.
Organizational control is exercised through networks of
personal affiliation cemented through gifts and service,
with allocations of downward-flowing benefits subject to the
control of patrons at various levels. The effect is that
the individuals with greatest influence on a unit's work
may not necessarily the ones immediately superior to it on
formal organizational charts (cf. Deyo 1978:69; Hanks 1975;
Neher and Biahya 1984). Deyo found clientelist concepts
shaping the growth of organizational structures in large
buninesses, as well. Large-scale business firms with Thai
management tended to grow "by a process of structural fission,
by which units or firms grown too large divide into two or
more new segments, each comprising a boss and his personal
followers." (1974:117) Hanks might refer to these newly

formed work units as formalized **entourages,** since they are .
marked by the same exchanges of generosity and personalized
flexibility **in** exchange for deference and shows of respect
as are found **in informal** entourages. **While** acknowledging the
authority **of** his superior and desiring his praise, attention,
and moral **support,** the **subordinate** nevertheless prefers to
avoid **restructurings** that would weaken his. **relational.position**
between management and **workgroup** (Klausner 1983:226). ·

Needless to say, an entourage has difficulty cooper-
ating with other entourages of equivalent status and influ-
ence. Since **services** and work relationships **normally** flow
along hierarchical lines, it can be difficult for those
at the **same** level to initiate joint action. The reason:
"It is difficult for an equal to give anything of value
to an·equal ~~no~~ *or.* to command his **'respect.'** Indeed, he **stands**
as a **potential** competitor for favors." (Hanks and Phillips
1960:642). Therefore, the most effective **way** to gain **cooper-**
ation of an individual at or. above **one's** own social or or-
ganizational position is to work upwards through your **own**
patron's contacts to a level at which negotiation can be
made to your own **advantage,** with the effects **flowing** back
downwards through the **other's** patrons or **superiors.** Should
the other be inferior to you, on the other hand, you may
save time **and** trouble by discreetly including the **individual**
in your own network of friends.[3]

The above sketch outlines the social context of our three case studies. Let us look briefly at their place in Thai church history as well.

GROWTH POINTS IN THAI CHURCH HISTORY

Some 160 years of Protestant missionary work in Thailand has produced only some 100,000 (at most) church members scattered among more than 50 church groups, organizations, denominations, and fellowships. They still represent less than two tenths of one percent of the population. With a sizable portion (at least 20%) of the Protestant community drawn from hilltribes, Chinese, and foreigners (cf. Smith 1982), missionaries are still said to have failed to penetrate the Theravada Buddhism of the majority ethnic Thai. Thus, Thai church history might be expected to have few highlights, yet there are a number of key growth points to be found.

Protestant missionaries have been in Thailand since 1828, but the first decades saw few lasting conversions. In 1870, after a collective 42 years of work, the Protestant churches could boast only 115 baptized members between then --35 in Presbyterian churches in Bangkok, Petchburi, and Chiengmai, and 70 in a Chinese church started by the Baptists in Bangkok (Smith 1982: 45,52). Over the next 47 years the Presbyterians grew to some 8000 members nationwide, with 84% coming from work in Northern Thailand led by Dr. Daniel McGilvary (Smith 1982:92).

The North Carolina born and bred McGilvary, with a
Doctor of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological
Seminary, arrived in Thailand in 1858 at the age of 30.
He married Dan Beach Bradley's daughter in 1860,[4] and the
next year opened a new mission station among Lao (Northern
Thai) who had migrated south to Petchburi. In 1864 he took
a brief survey trip to Chiengmai, and in 1867 opened the
first station of the Laos Mission of the Presbyterian Church
in that city.

In just over two years McGilvary and his colleague
Jonathan Wilson had baptized seven converts, and sensed
openness *among* many more contacts, including some members
in the court of the Prince. Chiengmai Prince Kawilorot
brought things to a halt in 1869, however, when he exe-
cuted two of the new Christians for allegedly failing-
to respond to a corvee work summons in time. The action
isolated the missionaries to the point that they found it
difficult to even hire mission employees for some time.

Growth resumed in 1876 with six baptisms in that year,
and 11 more in each of the next two years. From 1876 to
1895, with the exception of just two years (in one of which
McGilvary was on furlough) baptized membership increased
by 20% or more each year. (See Figure II.) Seven of those years saw increases
of 40% or more.[5] This growth occured despite a scattering
of converts in groups sometimes several days' journey from
each other, and a small missionary force which never had

FIGURE II.

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES
OF THE LAOS MISSION
TO 1920.
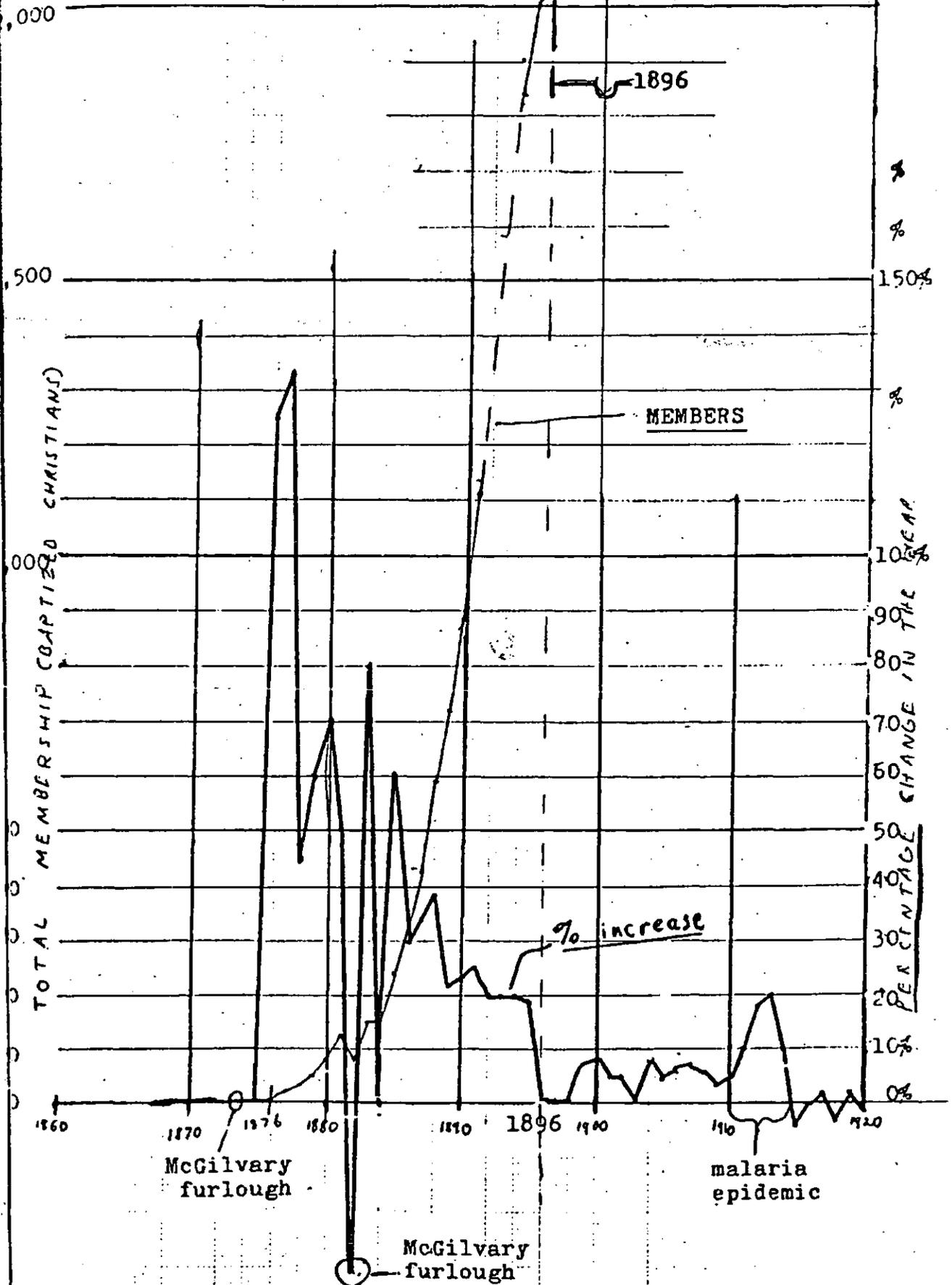
even as many as ten missionaries on the **field** until the
late 1880s.[6] When it is considered that transfer growth was
completely impossible on this pioneer field, **McGilvary's**
accomplishment was truly remarkable. Not until recent decades
have similar growth rates been achieved in Thailand, and those
who **have** achieved them in recent years have often been
able to develop local leaders who had been converted and
trained by others.

McGilvary is the **subject** of our first case study.

In 1896, as the *Presbyterians'* **fast-growing** foreign staff reached 34,
church growth in the North suddenly slowed. For the next
14 **years,** growth ranged between 1% and 8% in each year.
(See Figure II) A malaria epidemic beginning in 1911 boosted
growth for four years (raising membership from 4000 to
nearly 7000), but the Northern church then settled into

7

a period of negative real growth. The **church** nationwide
was doing little better. Although the newly united national
Presbytery had 8000 members in 1920, it grew to **only 9000+**
on **the** eve of the Second World War (Smith 1982:148). During
the same period the population of **Thailand** would have grown
by nearly 50%. The one bright spot leading up to the War
was a series of evangelistic Crusades featuring Chinese
evangelist John Sung, which **Church** of Christ in Thailand
(CCT) General Secretary Boonmark **Kittisarn organized** over
the opposition of the mission. **Sung's** crusades and their

FIGURE III.

TOTAL PROTESTANT MEMBERSHIP

IN THAILAND FROM 1920

TO PRESENT:

CCT, Non-CCT, and Four
Largest Pentecostal
Churches in Bangkok.

40,000

30,000

20,000

15,000

10,000

8,000

5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
000

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

?

(1986)

(1978)

all non-CCT

CCT

(1987)

avg attendance

1920   1930   1940   WWII   1950   1960   1970   1980

YEAR

CCT es-
tablished

Boonmark
resigns

four largest
Pentecostal
churches in
Bangkok
(daughter churches
excluded)
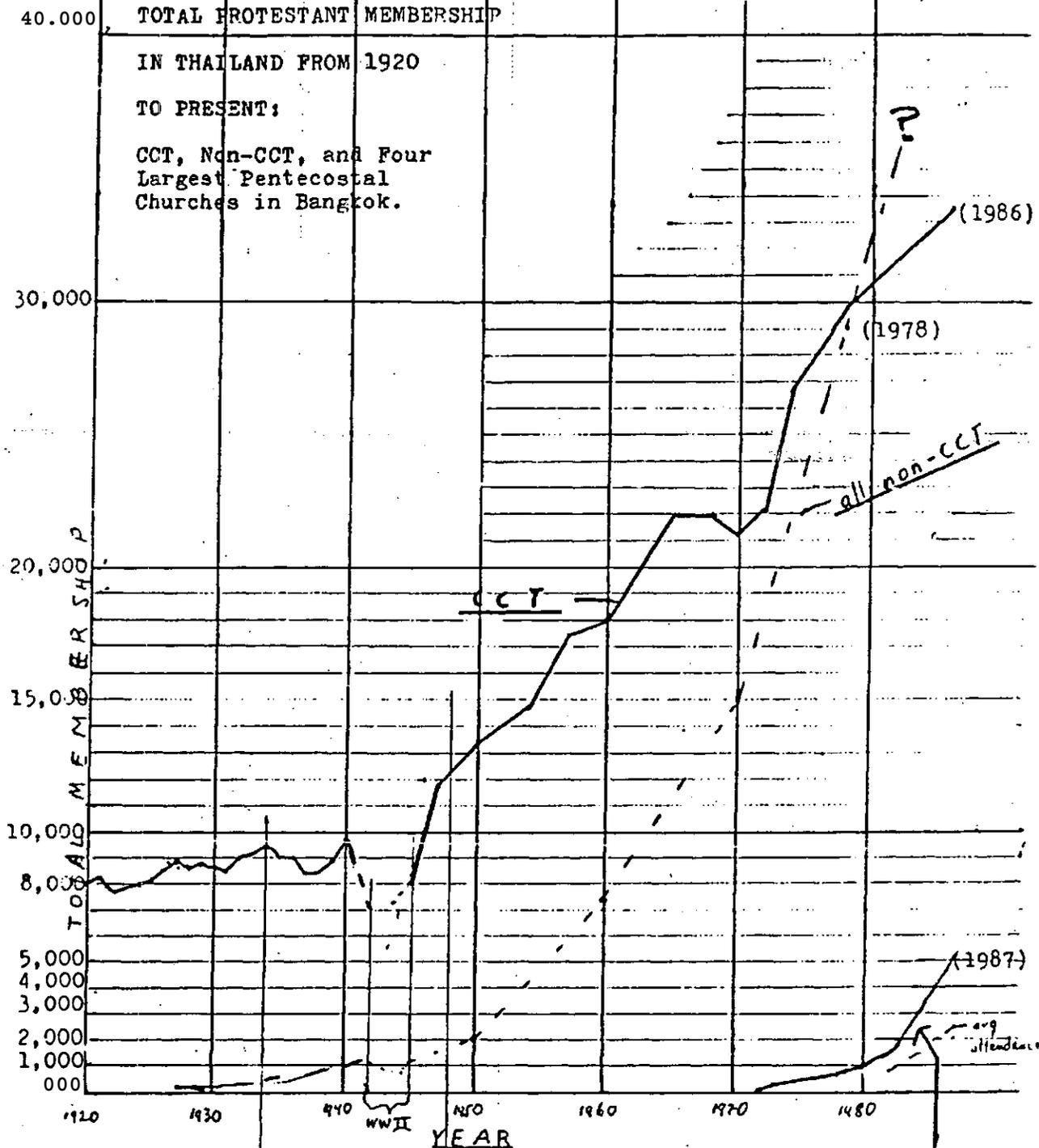
SOURCE:
Smith, except 1940
figure (Prasith)
and 1980s data

aftermath produced a 15% jump in CCT membership in just
two years (Prasith 1984:84).

After the disruptions of World War Two, including
heavy pressures on Christians in rural areas and in govern-
ment service to become Buddhists, CCT membership was estimated
at around 8000 in 1945 (Smith 1982:213,217). It jumped to
11,756 members in 1947, and 13,422 in 1950, when growth
slowed again. The CCT increased to roughly 18,000 members
in 1960, 22,000 in 1970, and 30,000 in 1978 (Smith 1982:
219,228). CCT officials estimate total membership at
33,000+ as of 1986. (See Figure III.)

A significant aspect of the CCT's post-war growth
spurt was that much of the underlying activity was organized
and conducted by the Thai leaders themselves, not by the
returning missionaries. A key organizer in these post-war
revivals was the same Rev. Boonmark who had arranged
John Sung's pre-war crusades. At the end of World War Two,
Boonmark organized evangelistic crusades in 50 churches
in the North, at which some 2000 converts are reported to
have responded. *(Smith1982: 213-215)* Increasing friction with the returned mis-
sionaries led to Boonmark's resignation in 1948 from his
position as CCT General Secretary and from the pastorate
of the Second Presbyterian Church in Bangkok. He immediately
began a new independent congregation, and continued arran-
ging evangelistic meetings both inside and outside the CCT.
In the late 1950s he pulled some of his personal connections

together into a loose **association** of local pastors and .

churches crossing **denominational** lines that had some of

the marks of an embryo Thai-style **denomination.** In this

same period, he became a channel for the **first** major move-

ment of Pentecostal teaching into established Thai churches.

Although **in** the early 1960s he lost many of his Thai sup-

porters when joining with **missionaries** of the United Pen-

tecostal **Church** (whose practice of **rebaptizing** in the name

of Jesus Only offended many), he is nevertheless **reported**

to have built a Thai UPC of nearly 1000 **members** before de-

cline set in around 1967 (Smith **1984:252,254).**

Boonmark is the subject of our second case study.

The trickle of new mission organizations entering

Thailand became a flood after World War Two. While some

of these missions joined their work with the CCT, most

remained independent. By **1978** roughly half of the **59,**000

Protestants in Thailand were in non-CCT churches (see

Figure III). Two striking features of this new stream

of growth, especially in the last decade or two, **are** the

significance of **incr~ased** independent Thai church planting,

an**d** the growing prominence **of** the **Pentecostals.**

In a **1985** survey (Pairoj **1985), 43$** of the **81** Bangkok

churches responding said they had been started because of

the vision or burden of an individual or group. Another

15% had been started by a Thai or Chinese mother **church.**

Only **28%** said they had been started by missionaries (Pairoj **1985:5-8)**. The survey showed further that over **50%** of the Bangkok churches responding had been started since **1975**. Survey researchers noted privately that the majority of
these mostly **small** new churches had probably been **started** by Thai.

Four of the seven largest churches reporting in **1985** were **Pentecostal,** with the other three being numbered among **Thailand's** oldest congregations. All four were started within the past two decades, and **they feature** some of Thailand's most dynamic Christian leaders. The **Chai Samarn** Church, flagship congregation of the Full Gospel Fellowship Churches of **Thailand,**[10] grew under Pastor Nirut **Chankorn's** leadership from 35 members in **1972** to **160** in **1973, 500 in 1978,** and **780** in **1982** (Smith **1982:252).** Official baptized members totaled **1200** by October , with an average **of** 800 attending Sunday **services.**[11] Many of the **35** churches in the Full Gospel Fellowship Foundation had been started by Chai **Samarn** personnel, or developed with their assistance.

Wirachai Kowae's Rom Yen church is the largest congregation of the Christian Fellowship of **Thailand,** associated with the American Assemblies of God **(AOG).** In the mid-**1970s, the AOG** had just **50** members nationwide in six churches. But by **1982, Wirachai's Ekkamai** church in Bangkok

had already grown to **240 members** (Smith 1982:252). The church moved to larger quarters on Soi Rom Yen that same year (taking the name Rom Yen Church), and started its own home missions **organization.** Official membership of the Rom Yen Church in October **1987 was** roughly **500,** with **average** Sunday attendance of over **300.** Rom **Yen's** mission organization claimed **12** daughter churches, part of a total of 41 churches now associated with AOG's work.

In **1979,** Rev. Wan **Petchsongkhram,** a Baptist **evangelist,** [12] pastor, and former Baptist Seminary President, gathered a group of Thai leaders around himself to found an independent, self-funded Pentecostal movement. His new **Rom Klao Church** had over **100** attending Sunday services within the first two months, and became the **first** large Pentecostal church in **Bangkok** without a formal relationship with a foreign mission. Rom Klao has **grown** in eight years to claim an official membership of **1000.** It is unofficially reported to average **350-400** in Sunday services, and to have roughly half a dozen **daughter** churches in the **provinces.**

The newest of the large independent Pentecostal churches, Rev. Dr. ███████████████'s Hope of Bangkok Church, is at once the largest, **fastest-growing,** and most controversial Protestant church in Thailand. Starting with **just** **17** individuals attending its initial **service** in September **1981,** Hope of Bangkok grew to an unofficial **average** of roughly **1000** in Sunday **services,** in 1987 with an official membership

of 2500 by October **1987.** Both figures were the largest in the nation for a single congregation. Nine daughter churches in the provinces accounted for nearly 1000 additional members, and two of them were said to be the largest congregations in their respective regions. Church leadership *announced* a goal of 20 additional congregations for 1988, as they worked toward an overall **objective** of 685 churches (one for each **district** in Thailand) by the year 2000. Though widely accused of "stealing" its members from other churches, **a different** underlying/dynamic ^growth^ is revealed in

(1985:19,52)

Pairoj's survey of Bangkok churches./With a starting average attendance of only 280, Hope of Bangkok accounted for some **45%** of all the conversions in the city in 1984 (it **claimed** 1500 **enquirers),** to grow by some **50%.** Hope of Bangkok has its members organized and motivated for **aggressive** evangelism, follow-up, and teaching with an intensity that is not quite matched anywhere else, and it seems to **be,** getting results.   ▇▇▇▇▇ is the *subject* of our third case study.

Thus **we** have singled out Daniel McGilvary, **Boonmark Gittisarn,** and ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ for special attention. As we analyze the work and leadership patterns of each, we will first **note** the **key** developments in Thai society for that period, **then** the achievements of that particular leader, and **how** his leadership patterns fit the **socio-cultural** expectations of his day to **enable** effective work.

MCGILVARY — THE EXEMPLARY PATRON

Socio-Cultural Context

McGilvary worked during a time of great changes in Northern Thailand's social and political structure. In 1867, when he moved to Chiengmai, the local prince had nearly absolute authority within his own domains, although he had to pay a triennial tribute in person to the Siamese King in Bangkok (cf. McGilvary 1912:56). Patron-client responsibilities in those days were one-on-one relationships registered and enforced by law. It was through the patron-client system that armies were raised, public works constructed, and government revenues collected. Each local patron was duty-bound to respond to the manpower needs of his superior, while acting as the local authority and protector of his clients. Each individual was required to be registered as the client of a specific patron, and his registration could be changed only with permission from superior authorities.

By the time of McGilvary's death in 1911, however, the North had been thoroughly integrated into the modernizing Siamese bureaucratic polity. The Chiengmai princes no longer ruled, not even in name. The corvee system of mobilizing labor for government construction projects had been abolished, removing one of the last legal props from the traditional clientele system. The traditional subsistence economy was becoming monetized, and an increasing range of

commodity taxes which were levied in Bangkok and collected by Bangkok-appointed tax-farmers served to make the traditional patron intermediaries relatively impotent to assist their clients (Tanabe 1984:93ff).

There were changes in the religious and cultural realms as well. The local monastic systems would have begun to be integrated and subordinated to the monastic networks centering on Bangkok. In 1910 the Sangha Act of 1902 would be applied in Northern Thailand, fully integrating the region's monastic practice into the uniform national system (Tambiah 1976:238-241). New secular schools began competing with the monasteries as educational centers, and Siamese (central Thai) began replacing Northern Thai as the language of government and education.

These changes must have seemed very sudden. In 1867, McGilvary could still describe the Chiengmai prince Kawil-orot as "virtually sovereign monarch within his own dominions" (McGilvary 1912:56), and in 1869 the prince had felt strong enough to pressure the missionaries despite a Siamese Royal Commissioner's urging of tolerance (McGilvary 1912: 118-129). But in 1874 a new Royal Commissioner accompanied by a troop detachment took up permanent residence at the Chiengmai court, and soon the Commissioner was raised further in rank and began taking increased administrative responsibilities away from local officials (Tanabe 1984:92). In 1906 the Provincial Reorganization Act was applied to

Northern Thailand, effedtively standardizing loca.l adminis-
tration on the central Thai model and ensuring greater
responsiveness to directives from Bangkok (Tambiah 1976:240).

Through the 1870s and 1880s, Bangkok levied taxes on
an increasing number of commodities, and the central ad-
ministration farmed out collection rights to the highest
bidder, usually Chinese. By the 1890s social and economic
dislocations in the North were sufficient to produce local
disturbances such as the Phaya Phap rebellion just northeast
of Chiengmai city in 1889-90 (Tanabe 1984:93ff). Clearly,
the old local powers were weakening as the new power to
the south made itself increasingly felt in some very un-
traditional ways.

Since McGilvary had come from the south and had person-
al connections based in Bangkok, he and the Presbyterian
missionaries were uniquely positioned to benefit from the
changing power structure in the North. He already spoke
central Thai (Siamese), and to many Lao he represented ah
opportunity to learn this increasingly important language.
He also represented the vanguard of a new system of secular
science and education, independent of the monasteries and
respected by the Central Thai leadership. Although the
first mission school would not open until 1879, and aimed
imitially at educating the children of Christians (Swanson
1984:37-38; McGilvary 1912:177-178), yet from the beginning
of the mission McGilvary leavened discussions of religion
with Western geography, astronomy, and medicine, and his
accurate prediction of a solar eclipse appears to have been

the key event leading to **his first convert** (McGilvary **1912:**
96-99).

More important, although McGilvary **had** come to Chiengmai
with the permission of the local prince, **it** soon became
clear that in times of difficulty he could call on more
powerful patrons to the south. By 1870 **Bangkok** was fully
aware of the dangers that foreign powers posed to its in-
dependence. She had just lost her Cambodian vassal to the
French, Burma had lost the rest of her coastline to the
British, and the Vietnamese Empire had French troops occu-
pying key points on her **territory.** Siamese attempts to
enforce her traditional vassal arrangements over southern
Malay princes had already run afoul of the very different
British concepts of territorial political **organization,** and
now foreign **logging** interests based in British Burma were
making contacts both with Bangkok and directly with Chieng-
mai to obtain logging concessions in the North. Bangkok
would have been anxious to avoid any pretexts **for foreign**
interference in Chiengmai or elsewhere, by demonstrating
that its rule truly extended to the North, and by providing
effective protection to foreign enterprises there. Thus,
when missionaries complained in 1869 that the local Prince
had **"murdered"** two **Christians,** a Royal Commissioner soon
appeared in Chiengmai **to investigate.**

When the **first** permanent Royal Commissioner arrived in
Chiengmai five years later, McGilvary appears to have main-

tained close **personal** contact. In 1878, when a dispute

arose with a Lac patron over a client accused of witch-

craft whom he had **earlier placed under McGilvary*s** protec-

tion, McGilvary said he **was** willing to have the case tried

only **before** the **Commissioner.** McGilvary was sure to lose

before a Lao court, he thought (due to the nature of the

case), but sure to win before the **Commissioner.** The Lao

patron did not press the case (McGilvary 1912:205-206).

Also in 1878, a dispute arose over plans for the first

Christian wedding, when a family patriarch **demanded** pay-

ment of the traditional spirit fee before he would allow

the marriage to be declared legal. Anticipating that the

local princes might side with a protest from this man,

McGilvary had attempted to use his Siamese connections

from the beginning, but the Commissioner said he had not

been given authority to interfere in affairs at the local

level. When the prince in Chiengmai held against the marriage,

saying that nobody but the King himself could **overturn his**

decision, McGilvary appealed with the **Commissioner's** en-

couragement. The Commissioner himself was already planning

from Bangkok.

to request increased local **authority.** Not only did he en-

courage McGilvary to appeal, but he **advised** on its **wording,**

and made an **official** report of his own favoring McGilvary.

Thus, when the US Consul **formally presented McGilvary's**

appeal in Bangkok, he was informed that the King had al-

ready decided in the **missionaries'** favor. The enlarged powers

granted the Northern Commissioner that year included the
authority to proclaim religious toleration in all the Nor-
thern territories (McGilvary 1912:207-217). It would be years
before such an edict could be effectively enforced, and
later Commissioners did not always favor the missionaries
(Swanson 1984:29). Yet incidents such as these made it
clear that the missionaries had access to a patron super-
ior to any other in the North, and more powerful than any .
Lao prince. Therefore, although Lao Christians remained
under their formal obligations to Lao patrons, they had in
McGilvary a new informal patron of potentially superior
influence, and possessing the resources to give them some
limited protections.

McGilvary had still further resources to enhance his
local status. Though lacking formal medical training, his
supply of medicines," texts, and knowledge of vaccination
techniques quickly gained him a reputation for his ability
to cure widespread local diseases such as malaria. The addi-
tion of certified doctors to the missionary force in the mid-
1870s further enhanced his reputation. In addition, he dis-
played his financial resources in the construction of a
large mission compound, complete with such novelties as
a medical clinic and an organ for church services. He
possessed the resources to employ increasing numbers of
locals, and had ample access to still-rare Siamese language
literature (much of it Christian) which he made available

to his regular visitors.

In short, McGilvary had established himself as a new patron in Chiengmai, capable of competing with the local patrons on at least equal terms. It is quite possible, suggests Swanson, that the Chiengmai prince's opposition to the missionaries in the early days stemmed from political motives as much as it did from religious ones (1984: 12ff). The convert seemed to act as if he had a new master, and his newly hesitant response to certain commands (e.g. work on Sundays) made his loyalty suspect. The Prince may not have exagerrated when he told McGilvary in 1869 that he considered the Christians to have been in revolt, for on an issue such as Sunday labor the foreigner's word seemed to carry as much weight as his own. In the terms of the traditional polity this could be considered a sign of where one's allegience truly lay. Thus, as McGilvary drew a growing circle of friends and follwers around himself, traditional patrons would have become understandably concerned about the strength of the new extra-legal ties being developed between the missionary and his clients.

Growth of the Work

In any event, McGilvary faced down the early opposition and isolation, took a furlough on which he recruited a doctor and more funds, established himself securely in a relationship with the new Commissioner in Chiengmai, and began developing preaching contacts outside the city. His work began to grow.

Newcomer Dr. Cheeks had begun a hospital in 1875 which
doubled as a center for teaching literacy in Siamese (cen-
tral Thai), and in 1876 some of the patients began becoming
Christians. That year nine individuals joined the four
surviving church members (Swanson 1984:25). The next year
official membership rose from 9 to 21. By 1880, some Thai
converts returning to their homes in the country were draw-
ing around themselves the cores of three new churches several
days apart in Chiengmai and Lampang provinces, and the core
of a fourth in Tak. That year a few relatively untrained
Thai leaders, working almost completely independently,
won 43 new members from January to September (when the
yearly membership count was normally recorded), and 30 more
between September and the following January, thus nearly
tripling the church's membership in a single year (Smith
1982:73). By 1881, the church of four baptized Christians
had grown to 123 in four provinces, with four organized
churches.

Overall growth paused in 1881-82, as McGilvary went on
furlough, the founder of the Lampang church was jailed, and
contact with the embryo church in Tak seems to have been
lost. But on McGilvary's return, strong growth resumed.
Although no new churches were formally established until
1888, yet local Thai leaders (and sometimes interested
non-Christians) were building a number of rural chapels.[13]
At least three of these were dedicated in 1885 alone (Swan-
son 1984:35-36). Growth was steady throughout the period.

Smith reports that there were recorded accessions to member-
ship in every month from October **1884 to** at least **1891**
(1982:93), by which time total membership **exceeded 1,000**
throughout the North.

The remarkable thing about this growth was **that** it was
fueled by local Thais, with the missionaries rarely **present**
on the **spot.** More missionaries had joined the base in Chieng-
mai, but **Swanson** shows that **the** force in action remained
essentially **the one** man McGilvary:

> The situation in late **1885** was typical of the **period:**
> of the twelve missionaries on the field, two had with-
> **drawn** to engage in private business, two left the field
> because of illness, and two more **were** too ill to work.
> Of **the** remaining six, the four women were engaged in
> **educational** or **translation** work. **Only** McGilvary and
> Dr. **S.C.** Peoples, newly **arrived, were** both healthy and
> able to work with the churches, but Peoples **s**>ent **nearly**
> all of his time supervising mission construction
> *Cat* a new **station** in **Lampang]**. That left McGilvary.
> **(1984:34)**

The highly mobile McGilvary kept busy, traveling throughout
the north to administer baptisms, dedicate chapels, **and sur-**
vey potential church sites, and he appears to have **had** a
remarkably attractive **personal** touch. Yet he **incr**>**si**>**gly**
counted on Thai personnel to do **even** this work. Nan Ta,
for **example,** spent two weeks instructing Karen converts
in Long **Koom** around **1885** (Swanson **1984:35),** and was sent
to conduct his own survey of church **planting possibilities**
in the **Chiengrai** area in **1886** (Swanson **1886:37). Nevertheless,**
McGilvary himself **refused** to slow down. Kenneth Wells **(1958:69)**

reports that the 58 year old pioneer made his third extended
tour of outlying districts in 1886, and made annual trips
thereafter almost until his death in 1911.

As the missionary froce grew from 12 in 1888 to 33 in
1895, the newcomers copied McGilvary's pattern, taking tours
of their own into the countryside. Other mission projects
sorouted as well. Mission schools were established in Lam-
phun in 1888, and in Lampang in 1890. New mission stations
were opened in most of the provinces, giving them resident
missionaries for the first time. William Clifton Dodd opened
a leadership training school in 1889 that began producing
what many considered solid candidates for pastoral ordina-
tion.

By 1895, there were roughly 2000 baptized Christians
in 14 formally constituted churches scattered over five
provinces. The mission boasted 33 missionaries, 11 ordained
Thai pastors and evangelists, schools, clinics, Sunday
schools, a printing press, and more. For the first time,
McGilvary's evangelistic and teaching tours were being
backed up by a resident missionary force established in
most of the provincial centers, and by a new force of young
missionaries eager to travel. No longer was the mission
[1]
a one-man show. At last it would seem that the mission
had all the ingredients needed for redoubled and sustained
success.
Paradoxically, growth in the 1890s slowed dramatically.

The 20-25% annual growth of the first half of the decade, while still strong, was nevertheless a drop from the vigorous rates of previous years. Membership growth stopped almost completely in 1896-98, before resuming at still slower rates averaging around 5.5% per year. This might still seem a respectable rate of growth, since it doubled fieldwide membership by 1910. Perhaps it was simply unrealistic to expect the exciting growth rates of the early years to continue.

Perhaps. Yet the social forces underlying the earlier receptivity to Christianity had, if anything, intensified. The disintegration of the local traditional power structure had continued, economic conditions of the average farmer and low-level leader were not improving. The mission's position and resources for playing the role of patron had increased, and they were in a position to provide an even wider range of personal services in a greater number of locations. Furthermore, the mission had formally organized the Lao Presbytery in the mid-1880s, and on paper at least, there were more trained Thai-Lao leaders in positions of formal authority in 1895 than ever before. Clearly, the mission's failures came just when it seemed to be poised on the threshold of success. When we look past the marks of organizational growth, however, we can see that in that very success were the roots of failure. From the Thai Christian leader's point of view, something strange was happening to the friendly face of the mission.

Leadership Style

McGilvary had played the **patron** role well. He had combined the exalted statuses of **teacher, healer,** exemplary patron, and religious man all rolled into one. He did not hesitate to consult his own **"patrons"** in the form of the Bangkok authorities and to use the threat of such contact to gain **advantage** in a crisis. More important, he had a keen sense of obligations and empathy toward his clients. Due to their status and resources, most missionaries in this period would have been perceived as potential patrons by Thai, but few seem to have **played** the role as well as Mc-Gilvary.

Thai converts seem to **have** been able to establish direct person-to-person ties with McGilvary. His home was constantly open to visitors, who might even stay overnight. He responded **to requests** to visit **converts' villages**, especially when his "clients" faced **personal** crises. He **attempted** to help converts solve problems, even to the point of bringing **his** personal contacts to bear to protect **clients** from pressures brought by their formal leaders, as in the **1878** cases of the wedding and the man accused of witchcraft noted above.

Furthermore, McGilvary brought converts directly into the work of the inner core of the mission, effectively making them **part of** his personal entourage. In 1876, Nan **Inta** was ordained the first Thai ruling elder of the Chiengmai church,

even though on the **eve** of **its expansion the** church still had
only five members. That summer **McGilvary** took him along
on an extended evangelistic tour **of** four provinces. Ac-
cording **to McGilvary,** Nan **Inta** often led **the** way in **witness,**
in discussions **of** religion, and even in the debunking **of**
local spirit legends **(1912:170-179),** although **it** was usually
McGilvary's white face and supply **of** quinine that attracted
the initial interest. Three years later **in.1879,** Nan Ta,
a former protege **of** the late Prince **Kawilorot,** appeared
on McGilvary's doorstep, claiming to **have** fled the persecu-
tion **nine years earlier** after studying Christianity as a
monk. McGilvary accepted his account **of** conversion, employed
him as a teacher, and soon began placing him in positions
of responsibility as well.

The converts appear **to** have had **McGilvary's** full supoort
in **developing** new groups **of converts** into churches under
their own **leadership.** The Bethlehem Church **southeast of**
Chiengmai began through Nan **Inta's** efforts in his own and
nearby **villages.** Most of the initial **17** adult members there
came from two extended families. John Wilson baptized **ten**
adults and eight children there in May **1880,** and the newly
established congregation naturally elected Nan Inta as
elder two months later.

In **Lampang,** Chao **Phya** Sihanot had been **gathering** a
group **of** his **own** converts for two **years,** while maintaining
close **contacts** with **McGilvary.** At **Sihanot's** request,

McGilvary visited Lampang in October **1889,** baptized five
adults, and established a new church with Sihanot as elder.
Since one of the Lampang princes had already threatened
a potential convert, McGilvary tried to strengthen **Sihanot's**
position by reading **the** 1878 Edict of Toleration to the
Prince (Smith **1982:73;** Swanson **1984:31).** Not that it seems
to have helped, as Sihanot himself was jailed a year later
on **charges** of indebtedness that the Christians **re:** d as
a cover for religious opposition (Swanson **1984:31).**

In Mae Dok Daeng, it was Nan Suwan who laid the **founda-**
tion for a church that had **16** adult members the **day** after
its **establishment** on **25** December **1880,with** Wilson **officiating**
(Swanson 1984:32-33). Nan Suwan himself **was** no longer in the
area, having been resettled in the forced repopulation
of Chieng Saen city. The new Chiang Saen governor was a
friend of McGilvary, **and** had asked for a doctor to **help**
fight the epidemics that usually struck new **settlements.**
No missionaries were available, so **McGilvary supplied Nan**
Suwan with some quinine **"which** gave him the name of **doctor,"**
(McGilvary **1912:203)** and the man gained **not** only respect,
but also a second group of converts which. McGilvary formally
organized as the Chiang Saen church in **1888.**

In sum, McGilvary made himself available for consulta-
tion and assistance, acted in such a way **as** to preserve and
even enhance the status of those Thai leaders who worked
with **him,** and seems to have preferred working through local

leaders to working around them. He showed loyalty towards his clients through such actions as personal efforts in 1883 to gain Chao Phya Sihanot's release from a Lampang prison (Swanson 1984:35). McGilvary's respect for the natural competence of the Thai leaders caused him to operate the structures of church power in such a way as to enhance the local leadership's position and gain them respect. In effect, McGilvary had created a Thai-style system of entourage and circle (Hanks 1975). The entourage was composed of McGilvary, the handful of missionaries, and the most influential converts. His circle extended that entourage through the groups of converts that the more influential Thai leaders had collected around themselves. New church leaders in this period were selected by election and ordained by missionaries, of course, but since the founders of local groups were always the ones elected to leadership, the form of selection, though foreign, appears to have made little difference in practice. The church structure, while theoretically following American organizational patterns, yet retained the face-to-face personal quality expected in Thai patterns of clienteleship.

This personal quality began to disappear, however, as the missionary force grew. The expanded core of missionaries in effect interposed itself between the local Thai leaders and their patron McGilvary. In effect, the new foreigners displaced Thai from his innermost entourage,

although not even McGilvary would have read the situation in those **terms.** Furthermore, because of the relatively egalitarian democratic processes by which the mission conducted **its** day-to-day business, McGilvary no longer **dominated sufficiently** to produce the policy exceptions and modifications that a traditional patron would have **produced** at will in his **organization.** As a consequence, the mission that was once almost an extension of **McGilvary's** personality, now to the Thai point of view must have seemed to suffer from an identity crisis, with the resulting **mission** policies being an unpredictable synthesis of the views of McGilvary, Collins, Irwin, Taylor, and others. The policies themselves seemed subject to capricious changes as **different individuals'** views gained dominance, and it became increasingly clear that McGilvary himself either would not **or** could **not** call the **shots** any longer **when** he disagreed with a **policy** in his own mission.

All of this became obvious in a cluster of internal disputes that came to a head in **1895.** Issues included the **future and purpose** of Thai leadership training, **the** source and amount of pay for Thai **pastors** and evangelists, and the degree to **which** all the Thai churches should undertake their own **financial self-support.** The issues **seem** to have been perceived **as either/or oppositions** by much of the mission, but **McGilvary's** instincts made him ride the fence. He personally visited churches **to** urge increased financial supnort

of their own pastors, while opposing overly sharp cuts
in the mission s own pay to Thai ministers. He supported
moves to increase the number of ordained Thai ministers,
and desired continued training efforts along the same lines
(Swanson 1984:95-97; McGilvary 1912:377-381). Had the mission
been run on the Thai pattern, McGilvary's prestige as founder
and senior member could well have caused his views to pre-
vail, but in an American mission his voice was but one
among many. Thus, the mission slashed funding in one year
to try to enforce Thai church self-support, and abandoned
the self-support idea altogether the next year. Similarly,
it ordained a record number of Thai pastors one year, and
abandoned the entire pastoral training program the next
year. While many missionaries would later claim that the
moves for self-support and a Thai pastorate had been proved
failures, the sudden shift in policy seems more likely to
be due to the return of influential missionaries Dodd and
Collins from furlough (Swanson 1984:96). The two were known
to prefer a slower approach to advancing Thai leaders, and
Swanson's reading of the missionaries' correspondance sug-
gests that the two dominated the meetings at. which policies
were reversed (1984:98).

As for the Thai leaders, who seem to have been left
out of the policy discussions altogether, they had become
numerous enough in the presbytery meeting of 1895 to pass
a resolution over the negative votes of the missionaries
calling for increased salaries for all the Thai pastors
while removing from the churches the responsibility to pay

any of them. While some of the churches were already **willing** to pay their own pastors, they all objected **to** being forced by the mission to do so (Swanson 1984:95-98). Since the presbytery clearly had no power to force the mission to pay the newly legislated salaries, the resolution **appears** to have been a protest against the **barriers** that had been **unwittingly** erected to exclude the Thai from the **center** of mission power **even as** they were being given increased responsibilities at its peripheries.

For their own **part,** the missionaries were probably unaware of any changes in their methods. They were merely developing a church and mission organization **on** the pattern that seemed to them to be natural and logical. Their churches at home had always been organized this way, and by all appearances the Thai church had been organized in the same way from its beginning. The effect of organizational growth on the American pattern, however, was to depersonalize the missionary-local leader relationships that McGilvary had developed, removing thereby the personal traditional channels by which Thai **leaders** had gained access to the center of mission **power and** resources. Rules were **no** longer **being** set by **the** familiar leader. Instead they were being produced **by** some mysterious process amongst all these **strange** new foreigners who had come to help him. And in 1895 **they** found that even the united voice of all the **Thai** churches was not enough to produce the old kind of responsiveness.

To make matters worse, some of the more influential new missionaries do not seem to have shared McGilvary's high opinion of the Thai leaders' abilities. For example, William H. Dodd, who started the theological training school in 1889, did not expect to be able to turn his Thai students into pastors. Working from Dodd's correspondance, Swanson notes:

> The purpose of the Training School as defined by Dodd was to train evangelistic assistants for the mission- aries. Dodd felt that it would take a long time before the school could train enough evangelists to meet the needs of the mission. He also believed that it would be even longer before the mission could trust those evangel- ists on their own without mission supervision. He did admit that the students could make good evangelists as long as they remained under missionary supervision (1984:82).

In effect, Dodd planned to train Thai leaders, then put them in the sort of work that would both keep them from exercising initiative, and keep them from developing any potential clientele bases. Without realizing it, he had declared a major shift in mission policy and structure.

Dodd had been in Thailand not quite four years when he made his assessment of the potential of Thai leaders. McGilvary, by contrast, had originally built his work with relatively unsupervised local leaders. When McGilvary had first proposed a leader program back in 1884 , he says clearly that he intended it to produce at least semi- independent Thai ministers. According to McGilvary, the

Presbytery agreed to his project, then killed it with a
"far too formidable and too foreign apparatus," and "with
rules and regulations better suited to American conditions
Students could not afford the school, if they stayed on ...
than to those of the Lao churches" (1912:259-260)./ Ignoring
McGilvary's precedent, or possibly learning the wrong les-
sons from it, Dodd managed to run his new training school
for four years without producing any graduates whom he con-
sidered qualified for ordination. Even from furlough in the
USA, he advised the mission against ordaining any Thai,
even though a number of his graduates had already proven
themselves, in McGilvary's opinion, in evangelism and church
work (1912:377-378). Robert Irwin, who headed the school in
Dodd's absence, thought his students so competent that he
put the second year class to work teaching the first year
class (Swanson 1984:82).[14] Like McGilvary, he was pleased
with the school's graduates, and in 1893-4 the Presbytery
ordained eight new ministers, "at least five of whom,"
suggests Swanson, "proved to be from good to outstanding "
(1984:101). But when Dodd returned from furlough, his views
dominated future policy on Thai leaders. His faction produced
the sudden policy shifts in the 1895 Presbytery meetings,
his training school ceased to function in 1896, and there
were no more ordinations for many years. The opinion that
"experience has shown that there are no Lao men as yet
competent to be made pastors" (quoted in Swanson 1984:99)
soon dominated the mission. Even the Lao Presbytery ceased

to function in any meaningful way until revived with reduced missionary participation **and a lesser** role in 1908, and the establishment of mission stations in every province was already **effectively** elbowing aside the Thai leadership from their traditional position between the mission **chief** and the local **congregation.**

Thus, as the mission expanded, missionaries displaced **local** Thai leaders **from** their place **in** the **patron's** entourage, demoted their place in the local **congregation,** and increasingly ignored their personal needs and interests as leaders to an extent that McGilvary would never have **done.** Although both Swanson and Smith have blamed the mission's preoccupation with hospitals and schools for producing a weak church (Swanson says the missionaries should have been doing more "pa**storal"** work, while Smith wants them doing more pioneer church planting), it could well **be, the missionaries'** preoccupation with institutional work was what made it possible for the Lao church to continue growing at all, by keeping the missionaries too busy to interfere even more with the local Thai leadership structures along which McGilvary had first built the church.

Socio-Cultural Context

Like McGilvary, Boonmark ministered in a time of great changes. By 1920 Northern Thailand had been sufficiently integrated with the Center for the Presbyterian Mission to unite the Thai Presbyteries of the two regions. In 1932 a coup organized by palace officials ended the absolute monarchy and ushered in a series of governments in parliamentary form usually backed and sometimes controlled by military factions. A new Thai nationalism was developed in the early twentieth century partly through the efforts of the monarch of the Sixth Reign, King Vajiravudh. It included Buddhism as an element of the new national identity, with the three institutions slogan of Chāt, Sātsanā, Phramahā-

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kasạt (Nation, Religion, King). Nationalistic pressures on the foreigners and Christians increased in the decade lending up to World War Two, and reached a peak under the Japanese occupation. The Japanese seem to have suspected Christians of being Fifth Columnists for the Americans, and the pressures on Christians to reoant sometimes became quite physical.

Bangkok grew in importanoe as a commercial and administrative center throughout this period, and more and more of its canals were turned into roads. Western influences on Thai culture were increased through the expanding secular

education system, translated Western literature, a shift in the government bureacracy from a personal-formal basis of government towards a more functional-legal basis, and even through the developing of a Western-style Thai nationalism. There was even a period in which it was required by law to wear Western clothing in Bangkok.

The nation's development continued after World War Two, and it is in the period of the 1950s that the series of community studies began on which the traditional scholarly picture of Thai rural society is based, and from which I draw for my description of Thai clienteleship structures. While legally-enforced patron-client obligations no longer existed, the informal clientele systems were still so strong at all levels of government and society that Western social scientists were using the clienteleship model to explain such diverse matters as government corruption, the ability of bureaucracies with haphazard record-keeping systems to efficiently accomplish their ends, the formation and regrouping of coup groups and business conglomerates, and the sometimes dizzying changes in scope, function, and name of government Ministries on the flimsiest administrative justifications (Hanks 1968, 1975; Skinner 1958; Hanks and Phillips 1960; Riggs 1967). The 1950s seem to have been the period in which Hanks* "entourage and circle" concept was most appropriate to the analysis of Thai social structure. In a society where/personal relations were usually more important than ideological dogma, we should not be surprised to find effective church leaders for whom the same was true.

The Man and His Work

(NOTE: Background for much of the following information, especially for the late 1940s and the 1950s, comes from an interview with Rev. Charan Ratanabutr and his wife, Phirun, on October 1987. Phirun is one of Rev. Boonmark's daughters. Rev. Charan is Chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT), and pastor of the independent Bangkok Church, which Boonmark founded. He and his wife also work in the administration of the Gittikoon Wittaya School, founded by Boonmark's wife. I remain responsible, of course, for any errors in the analysis.)

Boonmark Gittisarn was born in a Buddhist family and converted to Christianity at the age of 17 while a student at the Presbyterians' Bangkok Christian College. He joined the ministry, becoming active as an evangelist, pastor, and Presbytery leader. In 1934, at the age of 37, he became the first Assistant General Secretary of the newly formed Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT),[16] becoming the organization's first Thai General Secretary four years later. Not only did he hold the most influential administrative position in the Thai church, but by the start of World War Two he was also pastor of the Second Church in Bangkok, which today remains the largest Thai-language congregation in the CCT.[17]

In 1934 the Thai church sppears not to have been anxious to declare its independence from the mission. The CCT's official history notes a letter to the mission from Rev. Pluang

Suthikhem, who would soon be the CCT's first Moderator, noting widespread fears of the consequences of the expected end of the mission's aid to the church. Rev. Pluang also noted that because of the Thai sense of obligation to 9how faithful respect towards benevolent individuals of superior status (phū mī phrakhun), the leaders of an independent church could be oerceived by their own people as ungrateful traitors to the mission (Prasith 1984:70).

The mission went ahead in setting up the formally independent CCT in 1934, but the missionaries continued to dominate the fledgeling organization. Missionaries pointed out proper meeting procedures throughout the first (1934) and second (1937) national assemblies, they continued to be the trainers in most aspects of the work, and it was the mission that drafted the church's first Five Year Plan for adoption in 1937 (Prasith 1984:82). Although the mission noted that it had exercised no influence over the official resolutions of the first national assembly, the CCT's official historian points out that the other forms of influence were considerable. The very format of the assembly meetings had been set by the missionaries, and the CCT was supported and bound by agreements with and aid from the American church which sent the missionaries. Furthermore, traditional Thai attitudes of deference and respect caused thee to bend to the advice and expectations of superiors, thereby giving the missionaries great influence without their needing to

draft **resolutions** or cast votes (Prasith **1984:79**).

Within a year of taking over as General Secretary, **Boonmark** brought this atmosphere of peaceful deferential cooperation with the mission to a sudden end.

Three straight years of declining membership at the foundation of the CCT shrank the church **from** 9,421 members in **1934** to **8,408** in **1937.** This sparked no **little** concern among mission and church leaders. In response, the **Five** Year Plan for church growth was put into action in **1938** with the first of two major revival campaigns, at both of which Chinese evangelist John Sung was **apparently** the main speaker. Dr. Sung, whose revivals were already making an impact in Chinese **churches** throughout Southeast Asia, first came to Thailand at **the** personal invitation of the **Maitrichit** Chinese Church in Bangkok. **His twice-daily meetings** in the month-long Crusade are reported to have drawn crowds peaking at *18*

800-1500 by the end (Prasith **1984:83;** Smith **1982:195; Blanford 1975:34**).

Towards the end of that same year some Thai leaders and missionaries favorable to Dr. **Sung's** theology and style of evangelism sought to invite him for a second series of meetings, **this time** under CCT sponsorship. They were strongly opposed **by** a group within the mission who **considered** Dr. Sung a threat to church unity. They saw him as **abrasive** and divisive in approach, disagreed with the way he used Scripture to support **his** fundamentalist revivalist views, and

questioned the legitimacy of his revival methods, including emotional preaching, pressure for conversions, anointing with oil for healing, and loud praying (Prasith 1984:83). Moreover, there was disagreement with Sung over points of doctrine, almost certainly including a pressure on CCT members who had been baptized as infants to make a new adult decision to be "born again." The mission claimed that Sung caused "confusion" among the Christians with his teachings. (Prasith 1984:83). Dr. Sung's critics within the mission appear to have spoken louder than his friends, and Prasith notes that their influence and arguments were what produced the CCT Executive Board's refusal to sanction Dr. Sung's return (1984:83,87).

There was only one dissenting vote on the Board -- that of General Secretary Boonmark Gittisarn. In another day, that might have been the end of the debate, but Boonmark was not one to run away from controversy, and he had a few tools at his command. With them he took on the mission on his own terms and won a victory of sorts.

As General Secretary (Lekhāthikān), Boonmark held the chief administrative power in the CCT, and he used it. Ignoring the Executive Board's decision, he invited Dr. Sung to preach in his own Second Church in 1939. The meetings again drew large crowds, converts, and attention, together with growing support for Boonmark's faction within the CCT. Boonmark later got the Executive Board's decision

overturned (**Prasith** appears to say that this was **a retroac-**
tive move legalizing **Boonmark's** actions, but is not **clear**
on **the timing),** and he **sent letters** to District and church
leaders in the provinces opening the way for Dr. Sung to
preach there as well (Prasith **1984:83):**[19]

The faction supporting Sung (and, by implication,
Boonmark) continued to gain strength as church leaders
were **impressed** by the **influx of** converts and the new **motiva-**
tion of lay members for evangelism that, according to the
official historian, caused nationwide membership to grow
15% in just two years (from **8,413** in **1938** to **9,712** in **1940)**
(Prasith **1984:84).** Dr. Sung tended to follow up his **crusades**
with the organization of lay witness bands independent of
formal denominational structures. In Thailand these bands
carried their own flag and emphasized their independence
with the name **"Free** Volunteer **Evangelists' Bands"** (**Kọng**
asa prakat isara) (Prasith **1984:85).** Critics said they caused
laymen to overlook the importance of the church, a point **that**
made little difference to Boonmark, since all the converts
went into the CCT and increased his base of support.

The Crusades were followed up further with **series'**
of lay seminars, including a **12-**day Bible Training session
in Bangkok along the lines taught by **Sung.** Impressed **by** the
success of this session, the **Thai leaders** sought to estab-
lish their own Bible **Training** School independent of the
mission's Thailand Theological Seminary in Chiengmai, for
the latter had been perceived throughout **aft** a center of

opposition to Dr. Sung's work in Thailand. The initial

proposal of nor'hern Thai leaders allied to Boonmark to

open a new school in the same building as the TTS seemed

harmless enough, although the proposal of pro-Sung mission-

ary Loren S. Hanna as the new school's director made the

purpose clear. When at the urging of TTS's Director the

Mission turned down the request to start such a school,

the same group of leaders, newly armed with the CCT's offi-

cial sanctioning of Sung's crusades, followed up with a for-

mal request for the removal of Rev. N. O. Elder (sp?) from

the Directorship of the Seminary, on the grounds that he

had consistently opposed the various initiatives associated

with Dr. Sung. They finally won a victory of sorts when their

candidate for Pastor of the First Church in Chiengmai won

election over a graduate of the Thailand Theological Seminary

whom Rev. Elder actively supported. Complaining that the

whole course of events threatened to make his Seminary

superfluous, Elder had threatened to close it down entirely

if his candidate lost the vote for Pastor. He followed

through on his word at the end of 1940, resigning together -

with the two principal Thai instructors. They were not

replaced until the Seminary reopened in 1949 (Prasith 1984:

85-87).

In just over two years, then, Boonmark had greatly

strengthened the CCT's Thai leadership vis-a-vis the

mission's leaders. From a group whose executives had been

uncertain of their own relevance to the church,[20] and who had docilely followed the leading of the Mission, Boonmark had used Dr. Sung's visits to mold an informal group of leaders within the church who could marshal popular support, organize for evangelism and teaching, and even muscle an opposing missionary out of his position of influence. While they failed to gain a new Bible School under their own direction,[21] they had gained support of pastors in the key churches, and gathered sufficient strength by the third National Christian Council meeting of 1940 to reverse the Executive Board's 1938 decision to bar Dr. Sung from the Thai churches[22] (Prasith 1984:87). More important, the experience had molded together a group of leaders who would help Boonmark hold the church together through World War Two.[23]

The Japanese occupation beginning December 1941 brought the removal of the missionaries together with all forms of assistance, financial and otherwise, from overseas. The CCT itself, though having a registered Foundation, still lacked proper government registration for its church offices, and it suffered periods of church closings, brief imprisonments of pastors, and other forms of government pressure on its members. Short on funds, and never having been given effective control of related mission institutions such as hospitals and schools,

> the Church was unable to pursue regular programming
> other than the visitation of churches to encourage the
> members to remain steadfast in their **faith,** being led
> by Rev. Boonmark **Kittisarn,** the General-Secretary, and
> others who were eager to pursue this work. For the most
> part they were the same ones who had favored the ways
> of Dr. Sung. (Prasith **1984:92-93, my translation)**

In **1943** Boonmark gained the first official government documentation ever recognizing the CCT as a religious body, with offices at the Second Church in Bangkok, where he pastored. That same year he convened the fourth **National** Assembly of the CCT, also at the Second Church. Towards the end of the war he stirred churches across the nation to mobilize volunteer bands for evangelism, and with the end of Japanese occupation in **1945** the ongoing series of Thai-led **revival meetings** he had been organizing began producing solid growth once again. Despite the years of Japanese oppression, the **CCT** grew **fro**a its pre-war membership of **9,712** to a new high of **11,756** by **1947** (Smith **1982:213,217).** (See Figure **III,** p. **17)**

Returning missionaries were not entirely pleased with what Boonmark had done, however. Matters such as the installation of a new immersion-style baptistry in the Second Church during the war brought renewed accusations from missionaries that Boonmark was **"destroying"** the teachings of the church. Though elected to a fourth straight term as General Secretary to start in **1947,** friction with the mission continued to **mount.** The **CCT's** historian **suggests** that much of the problem stemmed from dashed expectations that the re-

turned missionaries would grant the Thai a free hand to continue running the church as they had during the War. The conflicts touched on potential splits between progressive and fundamentalist missionaries within the Presbyterian mission as well, with the former perceived as still aligned against Boonmark, who was expressing his frustration in a series of letters, tracts, and articles. In "What Modernism Has Done to Presbyterian Missions in Siam," for example, he accused the returning missionaries of having destroyed the unity that the Thai church had experienced under his leadership during the war. The Presbyterians should withdraw all their modernist •• (liberal) missionaries, he said, and replace them with fundamentalists to do pioneer church planting work. "If you do not do as I say," he continues, "your people here will have to fight with us, and we will struggle to the last shred of strength, to lead all the churches out from under your empire. These churches are not yours. . . they are ours . . ." (retranslated from quotation in Prasith 1984:117)

Boonmark had won his fight before the war, but this time he lost. In the face of increasing pressure from leaders of the mission, he resigned in 1948 from the CCT's Board, resigned his pastorate of the Second Church, and began an independent congregation of his own associated with the fundamentalist International Council of Christian Churches (ICC)[24] (Prasith 1984:117). A number of other leaders left

the **CCT** at the same time, including **Prasok** Chaiyarat (who
had **served** as **CCT's** Moderator during the War, and would
later found the Tiensang Church in Bangkok, which became a
member of **CCT** once **again),** and Suk Pongsnoi, who in 1970
would become **the** first Chairman of **the** Evangelical Fellow-
ship of Thailand (EFT) (Charan **1987).**

Boonmark's new "Free" Church of Bangkok **(Khritsachak**
thai krungthep) first met at the Thailand Bible **Society,**
then at his **wife's** Gittikhun Wittaya School, eventually
growing to a membership of some 200. Yet he continued to
concentrate more on the **national** level. He remained active
in evangelistic and colportage work, maintaining his personal
contacts with leaders both within and outside the CCT.
Through those contacts he continued to create channels **for**
Thai and foreign **evangelists** to preach in local churches.

In the late 1950s he began pulling those contacts
together in a flurry of new activity. Sometime in this
period he established the Sahaphan **Kritsachak Thai,** an
ambiguously named organization that could equally well
mean **"Thai Federation** of Churches" or "Association of Free
(Independent) Churches." Charan says it was supposed to
mean the latter. A number of churches who joined **Boonmark's**
Sahaphan added the word **"thai"** (meaning "fr.ee") to **their**
names for a **time.**

There Was an almost intentional ambiguity in the way
Boonmark built his Sahaphan. According to Charan, the churches
[joining the

Federation were not leaving their own **denominations.** CCT

churches remained in the CCT, at least in theory, as did

CMA churches remain in the **CMA. Charan's** own Bangkok Church

has never **officially** dropped the word **"thai"** from its **name**--

although it has been allowed to fall into disuse, it can be

mentioned from **time** to time as **convenient.** The phenomenon

of churches simultaneously **declaring** themselves both inde-

pendents and **denominational members, though** confusing to

American minds, makes perfect sense to a rising local leader

thinking in clientelist terms. **Even** in the mid-**1980s** I have

come across cases of strong **denominational** pastors and

local churches who for **all** intents and purposes have made

themselves independent, while continuing to cite their

25

denominational ties from time to time. Furthermore, the

Sahaphan itself had such **an unstructured beginning** that

Charan, who **for a** time held the position of General Secre-

tary, seems unable to specify a founding date. All he knows

is that when he returned in **1959** from five **years** of study

in the United States, the Sahaphan already existed, and

Boonmark made him General Secretary. Not that Charan had

much to do in this presumably **administrative** position,

since Boonmark used his personal influence and contacts to

do much of the **organizational** work **himself.** All we can es-

tablish for certain, then, is that in **1959** the Sahaphan

had **a** name, an office, an official staff of at least one,

and regular membership meetings conducted by Boonmark. We

can also be certain that the growth of the <u>Sahaphan</u> to this

point would have had little if any negative effect on the

membership statistics of existing denominations, because the

churches and leaders clustering around Boonmark were not

yet severing their old ties.

Also during this period, Pentecostal evangelist T.L.
26
Osborne began holding meetings in Bangkok. Smith (1982:

252) suggests these meetings occured in the early 1960s,

but Charan and Phirun remember it as the late 1950s. Shaffer

(1974:32) dates Osborne's first Bangkok Crusade in 1956,

and Charan reports that the events associated with Osborne

and the Pentecostals had begun before his own return from

studies in the USA in 1959. Whatever the date, Phirun

remembers that Osborne, who was used to drawing large crowds,

wanted to use the royal parade grounds (Sanam Luang) in cen-

tral Bangkok for a Crusade. When permission was not granted,

Boonmark invited Osborne to conduct a seven-day series of

meetings in his own church. He also assisted in the arranging
27
of meetings in some of the provinces.

Beginning in 1962 (Shaffer 1974:46), American Don Price

joined the Pentecostal work in Thailand. He worked closely

both with Osborne and with Finnish Pentecostals such as

Verna Raassina, whose preaching had challenged him to leave

an assistant pastorate in the US to become a missionary.

Shaffer (1974:45,47) credits Price with starting the Pen-

tecostal Thai Gospel Press, and Phirun credits him both with

starting the Bible School in **Muu** Baan **Sethakit** (still asso-

ciated with Finnish Pentecostal work), and with planting

a number of churches. He also provided the funds **for** the

28

present building **of Boonmark's** Bangkok Church.   When

Osborne was forced to leave Thailand, **Boonmark** continued

to work and travel with Price (Phirun 1987), and Smith

(1982:252) reports that on one of these trips Boonmark

sparked a major reaction by speaking in tongues. It **seems**

unlikely that this event would have occured so late, howevpr,

for Charan reports that the rising Pentecostal impact on

established churches was already becoming an issue in 1959,

especially among churches associated with **Boonmark.** Although

Pentecostal missionaries had already been in Thailand for

just over **a** decade, says Charan, they had done strictly

pioneer **church-planting** up to the late 1950s, and there had

been no movement of Pentecostal teaching across denomina-

tional lines. But in the late 1950s the **Pentecostal/charis-**

matic movement suddenly became an issue in Thailand. It

seems to have **spread** particularly among the Sahaphan churches

associated with Boonmark, becoming so strong **that** some who

disagreed with the trend began to disassociate themselves.

Others, such as the Chinese Tiensang Church and some groups

in the provinces, became Pentecostal at the leadership level

while staying in the CCT. Still others **juined** new churches

associated with Pentecostal groups such as the Finns. As

a result, this period saw some of the *fastest percentage* growth among the Finnish Pentecostals in their **stepped-up evangelistic** efforts, and not a little criticism from non-Pentecostal leaders (*although more significant numerical growth was to come a decade later* (*Smith {1982:254*), *with apparently little controversy*).

About this **time** Boonmark received **an invitation** to speak in Pentecostal churches in Finland. He continued on to the USA, where he linked up with William Cole of the United Pentecostal Church **(UPC)**. The UPC seems to **have** had a unitarian view of the Godhead, and offended many by **insisting** on **rebaptism** of new members in the name of Jesus Only. Cole's dogmatic approach and the aggressive manner in which he sought to build a UPC organization in Thailand caused some Thai **critics,** such as Phirun, to suspect that Cole thought those with **different** beliefs on these matters were not really Christian. Price, whom Smith **says** had been a UPC member earlier, warned Boonmark against working **with** Cole, but Boonmark invited him to Thailand anyway, and sought to help him build his organization. **In** a meeting of his Sahaphan, he announced he was disbanding the association, and urged its **members** to work with Cole. Those who did formed a **new** Sahaphan, this time denominational in structure, and committed to UPC **distinctives,** at least in theory. Most refused to **join,** including **Boonmark's** own **Bangkok** church, where leadership was passing to his **son-in-law.** Now well into his 60s, Boonmark began to rebuild for a second time, supported **by** periodic visits from Cole. From this point,

churches **and** leaders joining with Boonmark would have
been more likely to make clean breaks with their former
denominations.

Smith (1982:252) charges that "considerable financial
inducements were offered by the missionaries" to gain church
workers from the CMA, **CCT,** and elsewhere. This **remains a**
charge commonly leveled **at Pentecostals** gaining leaders from
elsewhere, especially in the provinces. A failure to **list·**
cases and amounts offered makes it difficult to evaluate
the charges of UPC's opponents. While it is true that **mission**
groups enforcing strict self-support policies in their Thai
churches would have been vulnerable to the advances of
competing missions **who** did not (in rural churches, this
usually meant that church leaders had to find outside
work to support themselves), Smith's charge is most cer-
tainly an exaggeration. His own account suggests **that** a
more significant factor in **UPC's** growth was the presence of
the dynamic leaders Boonmark (whose role he overlooks) and
Cole. **Significantly,** many of the leaders **and** churches ini-
tially **joining** the UPC seem have come from the same sources
as the members of **Boonmark's** earlier **Sahaphan.** Further**more,**
a list of **individuals** whom Charan said **became** involved
includes a number who remain prominent in Pentecostal work
today, which suggests that their primary motive in **joining**
Boonmark at this point could **scarcely** have been mercenary.
There was a commitment involved here, although **I** suspect

that the **commitment** was more to the **UPC's** lender than to the **distinctives** of UPC doctrine.

The **Boonmark-led** UPC saw quick initial growth. Smith suggests **that** there were as many as 1000 members nationwide by 1967-8. Since part of the initial start-up was a **formalizing** of **Boonmark's** personal contacts, it is impossible to know how much of UPC's growth came through transfer, and how much through conversion. It **is known** that the group pursued aggressive evangelism, as one of the complaints of UPC's critics is that it used "exciting **speakers**" (certainly some of the evangelists in **Boonmark's** core group) to entice their members into new churches. Whatever the **UPC's** peak size may have been (the information on UPC in the Thailand entry of Barrett (1982) is completely in error), it began to decline when Boonmark left the leadership in the late 1960s.[30] Cole must have found the going **rough** without Boonmark's presence and contacts, and he left for the USA for the last time a few years later. Today there are said to be only **a** few hundred members remaining in UPC churches, mostly in Northern **Thailand.**[31]

Leadership Style

It is **interesting** to speculate what might h've happened had the Presbyterian **missionaries** left **Boonmark a** freer hand after World War Two. Would he have pressured the entire CCT towards **a** more **Baptist/fundamentalist** stance? Or would he merely have moved it towards the **semi-pluralistic**

structure that it today **exhibits?**[32] Boonmark **was** hardly

a **dogmatic** ideologue, as can be seen in **his** ongoing drift

among mission associations, shifting easily among groups

that sometimes **considered** themselves to be diametrically

opposed on some major **issues.** He furthermore seems not to

have been **overly** concerned with the building and maintenance

of formal **denominational** structures, as can be seen **from**

his activities in the late 1940s end early 1950s, and from

the looseness of his original Sahaphan in the late 1950s.

As a pastor, he seemed to spend much of his time preaching

and arranging crusades outside of Bangkok rather than build-

ing programs in his own **congregation. Throughout** his life,

it would seem, Boonmark remained an evangelist at heart.

Much of his organizing activity, even when an officer of the

CCT, was aimed at generating evangelism, through his own

preaching, through the organizing and motivation of lay

witness bands, through Thai-led revival and evangelistic

meetings, **and** through making the arrangements that **made**

it possible for foreign evangelists to work in Thai churches.

Yet it would be **a mistake** to perceive Boonmark as an

evangelist in the American mold, for over the years he

built a considerable personal following, **much** of which

stayed with him even through **the** controversies of the late

1950s and early 1960s. It was a following that provided

audiences, but whose effects went beyond **that.** It **enabled**

him **to** use John **Sung's** 1939 Crusade and its aftermath **to**

battle the Presbyterian mission on almost equal terms for
the leadership of his denomination, the first time a Thai
had ever exercised so much power in the Thai church, or at
least dared to use it in such a way. Furthermore, his ability
to wield that personal influence across denominational
lines after 1948 indicates a leadership pattern which,
although different from the one the missionaries were trying
to instill in their people, could be highly effective at
times.

We can make the best sense of Boonmark's activities
by seeing him acting throughout in ways consistent with
his role as an entourage leader. Almost heedless of formal
denominational structures, he acted throughout to maintain
and build his entourage and its circle of influence. He did
not necessarily need his own organization to be effective;
in fact, Hanks (1968) would suggests that his entourage may have
been most effective when its key members were scattered throurk
the organizations of others. Maintaining such an entourage
requires some sort of patronage capital not available throurh
normal organizational channels — some good, service, honor,
or other benefit that the patron can dependably provide his
clients. Boonmark's clients were pastors and church leaders.
Their main desires would have been for converts, larger
congregations, and services that would have made them more
effective as leaders among their people. This is precisely
what Boonmark gave them, by acting as evangelist, organizer,

and as extra-denominational point of access to foreign

evangelists and expertise.

Although he had considerable personal ability as a speaker

and motivator of the **churches'** lay members, Boonmark devel-

oped his position partly by acting as the intermediary

(and often the translator) between the foreign evangelist

and the local **congregation.** Each desired the other, but lacked

the resources to make the **contact.** A single Thai congregation,

with just a handful of members, could scarcely attract

an American evangelist to travel thousands of miles to

preach in its **church, no matter how** dedicated the foreigner

might be. Outside evangelists, for their part, would have

had difficulty gaining access to churches **in** a denomina-

tional association without the assistance **of pre-existing**

contacts with people inside. By means of his personal net-

work, Boonmark provided a valued **service** to both, demonstrating

his **effectiveness** as a leader **in** the process.

In this way we can understand some of **Boonmark's** seemingly

erratic dealings with foreigners. Each represented a source

of power, a bit of patronage **which** could be used to **streng-**

then a personal following, and which followers could use

to improve their own local positions. It is hardly surprising

that a missionary opponent accused Boonmark of using **John**

Sung to gain popularity (Prasith **1984:88).** Nor is it **sur-**

prising that as a denominational leader **he** ignored criticism

of the formal independence of **Sung's** lay witness bands, for

they would have been expected to **retain** a sense of loyalty
to the man who brought Sung to **Thailand.** In **fact, Boonmark**
and friends were able to use the lay witness band **concept**
as **a** key tool with which to rebuild the CCT after World War
Two (cf. Smith 1982:217). Even after leaving the **CCT,** Boon-
mark retained **access** to a **personal** entourage scattered
in congregations **throughout** the country, and his **associations**
with foreign evangelists again in the 1950s strengthened
his hand. For his clients, Boonmark could produce the
evangelists; for the evangelists, he could provide audiences.
And nobody, it seemed, could subordinate **Boonmark** to their
own plans against his will. It was classic behavior of a
master of the informal clienteleship systems of his day.

███ — THE ORGANIZATION OF CHARISMA

Socio-Cultural Context

It **is** an open question how much Thai leadership systems have changed in recent years. Hanks **(1968)** suggested that he saw **little** change since his **researches** of the early 1950s, and recent studies of Thai **politics** continue to pay close attention to the formation and structure of clientele groups (eg. **Morell and Chai-anan 1981;** Chai-anan **1982;** Neher and Bidhya **1984).** But newer forces have also been at work. As Skinner had predicted **(1958; 1964),** assimilation of **Thailand's** large Chinese minority **continues** apace, but the acquisition of **Thai language** and customs has been **accompanied** by a **preservation of many** deep-structure aspects of Chinese culture in the younger generations. This **has** been especially true in the urban areas where **those** with **Chinese parentage** have concentrated, and could well be reflected in matters such **as** the **residence of** newlyweds, eating **habits,** and the like. Modernization has spurred the rise of p **new urban** middle **class,** composed largely of individuals with a considerable Chinese background. Western influences remain strong, especially through popular **music,**[33] **education,**[34] and **business.**[35] The past few decades have seen the rise of large-scale **corporations,** which tend to exhibit the forms of Western bureaucratic structure while being operated according to local cultural norms (cf. Deyo **1974;** 1978). The emerging **relational** norms of the **urbanized,** educated

middle class should therefore be **expected** to exhibit a synthesis of traditional Thai, **Chinese**, and Western influences. **Hanks'** classic concept of **"The** Corporation and the **Entourage,"** presented as a contrast between **American** and Thai styles of organization, might better be **rewritten** today to reflect an emerging synthesis.

Deyo outlines how both Chinese and Thai leaders in Thailand have adapted **organizational habits** to the structures of large growing **corporations:**

> With organizational growth, Chinese patriarchy **appears** to **have given** way to substantial **operational** delegation to first-line work supervisors, but with the safeguard of tight centralized personnel and financial controls exercised through strong staff departments.
> . . . .
> By contrast, Thai firms have remained markedly **clien-**telist. Hierarchical control is based on close supervision and diffuse though formal authority relations between clerks and department **heads.** . . . The close linkage in a clientelist system between **decision-making** power and control over **the** allocation **of benefits** minimizes both the delegation of responsibility to supervisors and the **organizational** consolidation of personnel control in specialized personnel departments. In general, the continued vitality of reward-based dyadic oatron-client relations at the department level has been dependent upon a continuing process of organizational **segmentation.**
> . . . .
> Several of the managers in the Thai firms **complained** of an inability to introduce cross-departmental policy coordination or even uniform personnel **practices;** and cross-departmental transfers or promotions were viewed with suspicion. To the extent **organizational coordination** is successful, it depends heavily either on clientelist relations among managers themselves or on consensus and bargaining in **executive** committee meetings. **(1978:71)**

Thus we see both fhai and Chinese **leaders** adapting their own leadership patterns to the new context of the Western-

style industrial bureaucracies. The complaints of the Thai

managers reveal the same underlying structures as Hanks had

observed earlier both in the village and in the government

bureaucracy.

Deyo did his research in 1972, and concentrated on some

of the largest corporations then existing, each having been

built through several decades of organizational growth.

As we move to examining a new generation of leadership in

an organization started just six years ago by the thoroughly

assimilated grandson of Chinese immigrants, we can expect

to see even more mixing of Thai and Chinese influences under

the Western organizational veneer. ,We will find a form of

clientelist exchange at work here, as well, but it is channeled

by a more rigid sense of organization, with the whole smothered

by the mass of paperwork needed to give the patriarchal

bureaucratic leader a sense of control at all levels.

It is an entwining of corporate, patriarchalist, and clientelist

structures, all expressed in the language of a Western-style

Pentecostal leader, but with some very contemporary Thai

meanings. This is the structure of Dr. ███████████████

███████'s Hope of Bangkok Church.

The Man and His Work

In 1973 a former AFS student and Colombo Scholarship

holder was converted to Christianity during his first year

of **undergraduate** studies at **Monash** University in Melbourne, Australia. Though converted and discipled by non-Pentecostals, **he** experienced a powerful baptism of the Spirit not long thereafter and **joined** himself in fellowship with Pentecostal Christians. Thoroughly dedicated, he became an Assistant Pastor and leader of the Asian ministry at Waverly Christian Fellowship in Melbourne, started the Monash Full **Gospel** Fellowship among university students on campus, studied Greek, and took courses at four different Bible training institutes (one at the graduate level), while managing to complete his Ph.D. in Economics on schedule. A voracious reader, **skilled** speaker and organizer, a creative **thinker** with an eye for detail, and a hard-driving worker determined to win souls and produce church-planters, he made a great impression on his **fellow-students.** Comments a Malaysian church leader who studied with him, "Compared to ███████, we **were** mere **grasshoppers."**

While still a student in Australia, ████████ was being given access to church and conference platforms in Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia. His detailed grasp of Scripture and Biblical teaching issues was said by church leaders to be unusual for an Asian. He became especially popular in speaking engagements in Full Gospel Business **Men's** Fellowship International, and in Pentecostal churches. He was becoming known for gifts of prophecy, healing, words of knowledge, **and** especially for his gift for expository teaching of Scripture.

As early as 1976, while still an undergraduate, ▮▮▮ had felt a vision to plant churches in his homeland. He returned to Thailand in 1981 with his Ph.D., became instructor in Economics at Kasetsart University, and sought a base to start his new ministry. ▮▮▮ has suggested that he first surveyed other Bangkok churches with a view to possibly joining their work ("It was even worse than I thought," he says, feeling that the Pentecostal churches then were especially weak in teaching). More often, he presents the public impression that his declared objective to independently plant 685 churches throughout Thailand by 2000. AD came to him whole as hie burden in 1976.

By August 1981, he had sparked some interest in his project, and early that month OMF missionary Dr. Henry Briedenthal,[36] Dr. ▮▮▮, his wife ▮▮▮, and two of his wife's sisters began weekly prayer meetings. A lecture room became available on the ninth floor of the Bangkok Christian Hospital, and on 6 September 1981 the Hope of Bangkok Church held its first worship service. That same week Dr. ▮▮▮ turned 27 years old.

There were 17 attending that first Sunday. Church publicity normally classes them as mostly "observers." In a lighter moment ▮▮▮ has said that they were mostly missionary friends, strangers to him, that Dr. Henry had dragged along to encourage him. One of those friends was Alan Ellard, then assigned to the staff of OMF Publishers.

Alan, who **himself** had not yet had the Pentecostal experience
of speaking in tongues, reports being less than overwhelmed
by much of that first service (███████ says the guitarist
couldn't even **find** the right key, and of course no one was
used to his way of doing **things),** but he was thoroughly
impressed with the quality of the sermon. He was one of the
ones who stayed. **In** fact, four of the **church's** first 13
members were OMF missionaries, **causing** some OMF personnel to
get the mistaken impression that their mission had started
the churcn. There Was **another** who stayed — Hope of Bang-
kok's first **convert.** It was the first of a string of weekly
conversions **that,as** far as I have been able to document,
has been broken only once (and for only one Sunday) in **more**
than six years.

Very quickly ████████**'s** church developed a reputation
for intensive teaching and intensive use of members' time.
In its early months, according to two of the first members,
a Sunday would begin with Dr. Henry and Dr. ████████ teaching
Sunday School classes for over an hour. Then came a **worship**
service running well over two hours, including a full hour
devoted to ████████**'s** sermon. An invitation was given
every Sunday, and every Sunday there were converts. Lunch
together **was** followed by another **teaching** session. **It** is
said that some came for the teaching sessions while contin-
uing to worship at other churches, but it is not known how
many did so.

As the **meetings** grew and the worship **services** became **louder,** they were moved seven floors downstairs to the hospital's **chapel.** Within a year worship services were averaging over a hundred, with activities lasting most of the day. Home cell groups had been started, as well as Friday night prayer sessions which often lasted most of the night. The Pastor also began special teaching sessions **for** a **selected** group of leaders in the church, and **continued** accepting speaking **engagements** both in Thailand and overseas during breaks in his **University** teaching schedule.

The new church took as its motto, **"The** highest praise, the deepest preaching, the greatest love." It sew itself as a new model church that would spark nation-wide revival **among** all the Thai churches. Its own goal to plant 685 churches in Thailand **by** the year 2000 AD became known to members simply as "the **Vision,"** cited **endlessly,** prayed for ceaselessly, even sung about. That the vision required equalling the combined results of the previous 150 **years** of Protestant work in Thailand was no deterrent, for the Vision had come **from** God, and its achievement would be a demonstration of his **latter-day** power and **glory.** ▆▆▆▆ seems to have been open from the start about his desires to attract as many good people as **possible** to help lead in **accomplishing** the Vision, but criticism on this point did not **immediately** develop. It could have been because ▆▆▆▆ was working to screen **his** members ("If you aren't prepared to work hard,

you would be better off attending somewhere else," prospective members were told), or because the movement was still small enough for its ambitions to be overlooked.

By the Church's Second Anniversary in **1983** there was an **average of** 175 attending, and a surge of growth was underway. To accomodate the growing congregation, the church moved Sunday meetings to the Crystal Ballroom of **the** Sheraton Hotel on Surawongse Road for a **year,** then to still larger quarters **at the 1000-seat** Oscar **TheatEe** on New **Petchburi** Road, where it **has** been **since** November 1984. Visitors continued responding to the invitation every Sunday; in the three years I have been involved there has **only** been one Sunday that I did not observe a response.

When **I** first attended services at the end of August **1984,** Sunday attendance was already topping **350.** Friday night leadership training sessions, for which members filled out **appli-** cations and paid to attend, had over **100** students doing collateral reading, memorizing verses, and taking exams. In an attempt to instill discipline, fines were imposed for tardiness, absence, and failure to recite the **week's** memory verses if called on. Over a half hour **of** prayer in the leadership training sessions being considered insufficient for building a nationwide movement, the **Friday** night prayer meetings continued. Cell **groups** had multiplied, and were organized **city-wide** under seven pairs of district leaders.

A year later, in **September 1985,** there **was** average

Sunday attendance of **600,** four new **Assistant** Pastors
developed almost entirely within the church (one of them
had converted through **Hope** of **Bangkok's** ministry), and
trained and supervised leadership in place for most of the
city's 24 **administrative** districts, divided under the
leadership of the four assistant pastors. In June 1985 the
church had begun the **Thailand** Theological Seminary, which
in **its** first two years would put some 300 students through
a four-month Leadership Training Course, and register **nearly**
100 in longer-term courses. (Under belated pressure from
the CCT, which claimed prior ownership of the name, the school's
title was changed to Thailand **Bible Seminary** at the end of
the **year).** A daughter church had opened in Phayao in June.
Several missionaries left their previous associations and
work to join the church **staff.** Notices **on** Hope of Bangkok's
growth began appearing in overseas publications. So many
foreigners sought chances to preach in Hope of Bangkok that
███████ begged off on some requests by noting that there
were hardly **any** slots left for him to preach. It was one of
his **most** successful years.

 With the model church role in mind, ███████ took a
stance of strict financial self-support of church activities
in its **early** years. He preached that the **time** had come **for**
the Thai church to rise to its own responsibilities in
church growth, finance, and mission. When foreign churches
and **organizations offered** funds to pay the remainder of

the **scholarship** bond that kept him tied to the university,
he turned them down. It was not until May 1985 that a Malay-
sian evangelist challenged the church to pay the 500,000
baht (US 30,000 dollar) bond in a one-time offering of
cash and pledges claimed to be the largest to **that** point
in Thai church history. It was not until starting the Bible
school **that** the church appealed to foreign sources for
one-time assistance (but only with no strings), and **not**
until raising funds for **land** would ▮▮▮▮▮ start **preaching**
that the church must be "humble enough to receive."

In late 1985 the church was known for its cell group
system, its concentrated teaching of lay leaders, and **for**
helping spearhead a new **Western-influenced** style of worship
that has already become common in **Thai** Pentecostal **churches.**
Hope of Bangkok had the most thorough and **pleasant** greeting
system in the city. Its follow-up was persistent, and ef-
fective at **incorporating** converts with any degree of **serious-**
ness. The sheer size of ▮▮▮▮▮**'s** vision and the confidence
with which it was proclaimed continued to impress and attract.
So did the church's **emphasis** on prayer, healing, and on the
gifts of the **Spirit.** Converts were known for their witnessing,
and for **inviting** non-Christian friends to church. Whether
through concentrated peer pressure, effective witness,
or the effect **of** experiencing the corporate worship exper-
ience for the first time (it was now led by a skilled and
sensitive team of musicians), most first-time visitors **came**
to respond to the evangelistic **invitations in** church and **cells** on
their first visit.
Hope of Bangkok was averaging 20-30 first-time decisions

per   So unusual were these numbers that an indepen-
dent survey discovered that Hope of Bangkok's figure of
1,500 decisions accounted for nearly half of the recorded
conversions in the city in **1984** (Pairote **1985:52**).[37]

By the end of **1986** there were an average of over
850 attending, making Hope of Bangkok the largest single
congregation in the nation. It had four daughter churches,
a **seminary** student body of **.1,50,** and **a paid** church staff of
over **40,** including people from all walks of life. Equipped
with a Ph.D. of his own, ███████ had been able to **attract**
a core of highly educated followers. He himself continued
to be one of the church's chief selling points. Considered
a model speaker and **teacher,** an unusually insightful coun-
selor, and with especially impressive gifts of faith, **healing,**
and organization, he drew such respect that he warned in **his**
1985 Christmas Crusade that he was not in fact a miracle
healer with acquired powers, but that any other **Christian**
could pray and see the same results.

But **as** ██████'**s** movement grew, so did his **opposi-**
tion. **Some** of it stemmed **from** traditional fears towards
Pentecostals and their teachings. Some critics disliked the
worship, with its loud praying, contemporary rhythms, mass
praying in tongues, and even dancing. **Others, usually** for-
eigners, criticized the church's structure and worship forms
for being **"too** American." ███████ was suspected of building
his church with foreign financing, even though **he** had in

fact turned down several offers of outside financial assistance. More telling criticisms had to do with **the level** of authority that the **leaders** sought to exercise over the members of the church, fears **that** by **1984** were already being fueled by a number of widely circulating **stories.**[38] ███

███ was **also** accused of seeking to grow at the expense of other church groups, and it is this accusation that Has brought him by far **the** most trouble from other Christians leaders, in public criticism, organizational opposition, pressure on individual members, even attempts to block or hamper ministry initiatives. ███ has tried to protect himself by wrapping his plans in ever greater secrecy, **and** has refused to respond to the criticisms in ways that would retard the push forward **in** evangelism and church planting.

The criticism seemed to come to a head in **1985** with **the** beginning of church planting and the opening of the Bible School, and it has increased in intensity since. By early **1986** the CCT published warnings in its denominational **magazine** and was circulating **a** letter among leaders attempting **to** keep members from **participating** in evangelistic crusades **featuring** ███ as speaker (they feared that any of the Crusades could be a cover for the opening of **a** new church including some of their former **members**). **In the** 1986 annual **meeting** of the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT), which includes most non-CCT churches and **organizations** (**including** Hope of Bangkok, at the **time**),[39] an amendment

was passed giving the executive Board power to move on
its own authority against member organizations "causing
disunity." Within half a year proceedings had begun, and
by January 1987 it was publicly announced that Hope of
Bangkok had been suspended from membership. The published
conditions for reinstatement seemed to require the prior
approval of local pastors before Hope of Bangkok could
begin a new church, a public statement forbidding members
to invite other Christians to any of Hope of Bangkok's
activities, and prior approval of an individual's former
pastor before he would be permitted to transfer membership
to Hope of Bangkok. The depth of sentiment in favor of
reigning in ███████ in that early 1986 meeting is illus-
trated by moves of the Bangkok churches to set up a com-
mittee, which, among other things, seems to have been
expected to develop standardized membership procedures for
                    HO
all the churches. It is shown further by a suggestion
of the southern churches that there should be a moratorium
on church planting in any district which already contains
a church (see 1986 minutes, in Thai, in the meeting document   s
for the 1987 Annual Meeting).
                                                                s
    Suspension from EFT seemed to have few tangible effect
                                                             ed
other than increased difficulty procuring visas for associat
missionaries , but the intangibles from the sustained and
amazingly vitriolic public attacks on ███████'s character
and the strain from the months of conflict must have been

tremendous. Nevertheless, ███████ continued to push forward.
With **Sunday attendance** nearing 1,000, he mounted a
34 million baht (US **$1.3** million) fund drive to purchase
land for a new complex including a 10,000 capacity auditor-
ium. The drive raised **nearly a** third of the amount in the
three months in which it was given priority. Five tore churches
were opened or affiliated from May to October 1987, **and**
teams were in place to begin **more.** A determined effort to
build membership doubled the official figure from **1,250**
to **2,500** in less than a year.[41] ███████ and the church
received **extensive** favorable coverage **in 1987** in popular
charismatic magazines such as <u>People of **Destiny**</u> in the USA
(Loftness 1987) and <u>Renewal</u> in Britain (England 1987).
███████ remained in high and rising demand as a speaker
overseas. In 1987 he spoke at churches, Bible Schools,
missions **consultations,** and leadership conventions in
Singapore, **Indonesia,** Taiwan, USA, Finland, and Israel.

In what could well be a prelude to his long-anticipated
initiation of international missionary activity, he was
reported **to** be advising Finnish churches on growth strategy, and
interviewed for Norwegian radio.

Leadership Patterns

Rev. Dr. ███████████████ **presents** us with a
paradox. No leader in Thai church history has **ever** built
such rapid growth, trained so many leaders so quickly and **well,**

or developed such a high and steady rate **of** incoming con-
verts. Neither has anyone ever inspired such strong oppo-
sition from his fellow **Christian** leaders. This is not the
place to analyze all the factors and incidents contributing
to this paradox. The often heard suggestion that the oppo-
sition springs **from** jealousy cannot be supported, as **there**
are real grievances on all sides that are not being dealt
with. The fact **that** they are not even being discussed,
or rather, the manner in which they have been fought over,
reminds us of our discussions above of the difficulty of
achieving cooperation among equals. In what follows I will
suggest **that** whatever the specific roots of the disputes,
they were perhaps an inevitable result of the manner in which
growth has occured — generated by a rather **understandable**
fear of the implications for one's own work of the rise
of this unusually effective Thai system of church leadership.

The analysis that follows is not intended as a **critique**(*nor as a*
l) of ▮▮▮▮▮▮**'s** teaching, methods, or activities. Much of that
remains far beyond the scope of this paper. Neither does
it try to suggest why the church has grown so fast. Instead,
it is merely an attempt to outline **some** of the leadership
patterns that can be seen at work in this remarkable or-
ganization. The analysis should show **that the** church leadership
is operating along lines uniquely **adapted** to the **expecta-**
tions of Thai culture, and therefore meets **my** hypothesized
necessary condition for strong, sustained church growth.

The analysis notes four key elements at work:

(1) A **Central** Store of Charisma

Sociologist Max Weber has defined **"charisma"** as

> a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue
> of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated
> as endowed with **supernatural,** superhuman, or at **least**
> specifically **exceptional** powers, or qualities (1968:
> I, 241).

He **suggested** that it was this quality which gave key leaders

the power to influence, change, and shape the dispositions

and actions of followers and of bureaucratic systems.

Weber **outlined** three polar ideal types **of** the grounds

on which a leadership might be legitimated: (1) **rational**

grounds, where a leader's authority stems from his followers'

belief in the legality of the set of rules under which he

was elevated to a position of command. In other words, his

authority is accepted because he was properly **appointed,**

elected, or otherwise selected for leadership. (2) **traditional**

grounds, based on the way things have always been done.

(3) charismatic grounds, resting on devotion to an indi-

vidual's charisma and acceptance of the norms and patterns

ordained by him (Weber 1968:215). It is important **to** note

that authority, by this definition, is a quality ascribed t⌐

the

leaders by their followers. The polar types **outline/means**

by which that authority might come to be ascribed. Once as-

scribed, however, authority or the charisma on which it
is based becomes in effect an objective good that can
be controlled and manipulated by a leader or leadership
structure within the bounds of a society's cultural expec-
tations. Thus, an especially effective leader's charisma
can be objectified, routinized, and distributed through
institutional structures such as bureaucracies, appoint-
ments, and rules, and through potent religious objects
such as amulets, images, and relics (cf. Tambiah 1984:
335).

"Charisma," thus understood, corresponds somewhat with
the Thai concept of barami. According to Morell and Chai-
anan, a leader who has barami "can command respect, loyalty,
and sacrifice from others." Since it is believed by most
Thai to be a product of an individual's accumulation of
merit in past or present lives, "a person with barami is
not only powerful but also well-liked, even loved and re-
spected by most people." (1981:33) /Christians would reject
the notion that their leader's barami had been produced by
the merit of a previous life, but a similar concept can
be seen in the assumption that barami is a mark of holiness
or Godliness, and a sign of God's special calling and dis-
pensing of authority to a leader. Thus, Buddhists and Christians
agree in the assumption that one has barami because he de-
serves to possess it. Herein lies one of the reasons for
leader-centric organizations in Thai society, for such a

concept creates a bias both for *preferring* charismatic types of authority, and for legitimating rational and traditional authorities (e.g. royalty) on charismatic grounds.

We will see in the third section of this analysis that a great central store of charisma/barami is a key good that enables ███████ to operate his clientele system. When the leader's charisma is objectified and regularized in a bureaucratic church organization, the effect is the creation of rational-based authority for lower-level leaders — an authority that rests with then only so long as they remain submissive to the full system of charismatic author-ity centering on the superior.

But how does that central store of charisma cone to be accumulated? What is it that causes people to ascribe such supernatural, or at least superhuman, authority and ability to an individual? The foundations of ███████'s charisma include many which are familiar to students of dynamically growing churches and religious movements. He is a man of unusual personal ability. His detailed knowledge of scripture and his ability to express his views more articulately than almost anyone else in terms relevant to the hearer gives him a great advantage as a religious leader. The clear, organized presentation of his thought, and the innovative-ness and success of his church organization links well with the repeated assertions — direct and indirect — that ███████ and his church point the way to a new era of pro-gress for the Thai church as a whole.

But ███████ is not merely an exceptionally able man.
The supernatural truly does seem to infuse his work. When
people come to him with a request for prayer, they expect
an answer with confidence. Although ████████ preaches
endlessly that anyone with faith may see God answer prayer,
yet the answers just seem to come a bit faster when ████████
██ is the one doing the praying. Each of the leaders has a
story of his own of a personal disagreement with ████████
when the pastor's judgement later proved right despite what
they had thought was a weight of evidence for the contrary
conclusion ("How did he know that?" they wonder). Even his
amazing drive may be credited to the supernatural ("I wondered
how he could work so hard and not wear out," said one leader,
"until I realized that the strength must come from God.") The
existence of these as a base for legitimacy is in no way in-
consistent with ████████'s assumption that all of his
subordinates should be seeking and achieving the same (since
God is the source, the power is therefore available to
any Christian leader of sufficient faith, purity, and what
might be called deservingness). Since none of them ever do,
however, their sense of ~~failure~~ shortcoming/ enhances their perception
that ████████ is somehow closer to God and able to hear
His voice with greater certainty and clarity.   -

The membership's collective memory is reinforced by
numerous stories, circulated spontaneously outside official
channels, illustrating ████████'s prowess as an exemplary

leader, Spirit-led counselor, preacher, and healer, who
consciously strives to remain humble. They include stories
of ███████ preaching on a city bus, getting on his knees
to be the first to sweep a floor at a retreat, selling his
car to ride the bus to work in a *church* fundraising effort. They
include his 5AM appointments to disciple a new convert who
had no other time available, 6 AM hospital visits before
starting Sunday services, and his habit of initiating the
wais at the door (an action normally expected to be done by
the social inferior). Many have witnessed blind people
seeing and the lame walking at healing crusades, and have
seen specific healing announced in advance as words of
knowledge from the pulpit. ███████ has a preaching style
so effective that it is a rare listener who remains unmoved,
and the message is delivered with such conviction that the
listener cannot doubt the existence of his source of faith
(in other words, ███████ can preach on almost anything,
and a sure side-effect is that the hearer becomes strongly
persuaded of the existence of God, simply because ███████
himself is so thoroughly and obviously convinced). Reported
to have read the entire Bible cover to cover eight times in
just his first year as a Christian, ███████ has developed
a knack for relating Bible passages to current life problems,
and for citing the little details of scripture that no one
else had noticed. All of life becomes suffused with an in-
terpretive scheme developed by the leader and grounded thor-

oughly in a profusion **of** scripture references **and principles**
said to be based on scripture. He **has developed** a total
system in which religious authority can be applied to indi-
viduals to work social change. As Geertz has observed:

> It is this placing of proximate acts in ultimate contexts
> **that** makes religion, frequently at least, socially so
> powerful. It alters, often radically, the whole land-
> scape presented to common sense, alters it in such a
> way that the moods and motivations induced by religious
> practice seem themselves supremely **practical,** the only
> sensible ones to adopt given the way things **'really'**
> are (1973:122).

All of **this is done in** the service of God, of course,
not of ████. A first-time visitor to Hope of **Bangkok**
experiences an intensive two hour participatory discourse
in music, speech, and group prayer on the existence, **power**
and authority of God, Yet the effect is **a** : generation
and replenishment of ascribed **charisma** collected in the
central store. This in itself is not unique to Thailand.
Similar processes could probably be noted in any churches
featuring strong, charismatic leaders. The manner in which
this store of **charisma** is applied to build and regulate
a growing organization, however, follows some key cultural
themes.

(2) **Bureaucratized Patriarchalism**

Patriarchal patterns of organization can be found
both in traditional Thai government **bureaucracies,** composed
of a chief and officials dependent on him, and in the tradi-
tional Chinese family business. As Deyo demonstrated above,
they are seen with **greater** clarity in the latter. ████,

as **a** grandson of Chinese immigrants to Thailand who does not **spea'** the ancestral language (though he is said to under-stand it), has been socialized in a synthesis of the Thai and Chinese cultural worlds, with a heavy dose of **W^sterni-**zation (gained in at **least** nine years of overseas residence) added for good measure. Because he was raised in a Chinese family (even though the parents must have been fairly well **assimilated),** we can **expect** the organizational instincts **built** in by that upbringing to reflect some Chinese patterns. Furthermore, Skinner has demonstrated **(1957,1958)** that many **of** the most successful Chinese have **traditionally** been co-opted **into** the Thai elite, with assimilated Chinese consti-tuting a sizable proportion of the more influential **strata** *of this century.*
of civil servants in **earlier years/.** Thus, with a church **leader**ship **whose** core is composed primarily of young, acculturated Thai-Chinese and highly educated elite and semi-elite Thai, we should be surprised if Hope of **Bangkok's** leadership patterns did not reflect some of the norms of Chinese or-ganizational behavior.

As founder, chief **administrator,** and source and arbiter of all authority in the church, ███████ is the functional equivalent of the traditional Chinese patriarch atop the family **business.** As Deyo **(1978) noted** in his study of large-scale **Chinese-run organizations,** financial matters are handled through a staff function where the details can *be kept*

privately among a few **individuals, with** no intent of **revealing**
the **details** to line personnel. Vital statistics of all
sorts, including weekly **attendance,** are treated in a similar
manner. Personnel decisions (such as selection of volunteer
co-workers and of cell **leaders)** may be **handled** by line
personnel who recruit their own volunteers, but on higher
levels, selections are usually made or **approved** directly
from the top. Not only can individual assignments to organi-
zational tasks be changed at a **moment's** notice, but the
entire **organization's** structure may be redrawn in just a
few hours' discussion among ranking leaders **--** **as** recently
happened twice in just a six month span of time.

A great deal of paper is generated in efforts to main-
tain maximum control at the top. There are attendance records
on individuals, and individual cell reports on offerings,
on follow-up **visits,** on three-month cell projections, on
individual cell plans, individual work charts, and more,
although church-wide collection of much of this data is
almost invariably incomplete. Budget and funding requests
require wading through such a dizzying array of forms **and**
rules understood in their entirety by only a handful **of**
individuals that much of the financial decision-making pro-
cess appears to occur outside the **formal** system. There is
almost an obsession for recording and keeping **records--of**
sermons, **speeches,** bulletins, meeting records, member files,
visitor and decision cards **--** which is faintly reminiscent of

the chronicle traditions of Chinese **Emperors.** Here again

the system seems to overwhelm its personnel. A researcher

attempting in 1985 to double-check the church's claim of

1,500 converts the previous year was told that none of the

records could be located any more. In another case, a

leader claimed that a months -long delay **in the** church's re-

defining **of/membership** procedures had been caused by an ina-

bility to locate any copies of the church **constitution.** Whether

or not this was true, it was **clearly** considered **believable.**

The intent of all this paper, at least in theory, is to

give structure to the organization while giving the **leaders**

the tools for effective **organizational control.** All of the

data generated each week is to be summarized upwards, to

give higher level **leaders** grounds on which to evaluate

progress and base decisions. And the detailed system of

report forms, even when incompletely enforced, permits

spot-check quizzing and **correction** by top leadership of

personnel at any level **of the** organization.

As **data** flows upwards, policies flow downwards. The

working definition of the Thai word **nayōbāi** ("policy"), whether

in government or **business,** appears to be "an announced in-

tention by the leader regarding future organizational

practice." At Hope of Bangkok, such policy may be announced

orally in a meeting, or dispensed in the form of brief notes,

often with minimal to no explanation, from the desk of the

leader. It is the responsibility of lower level **personnel** to

convert intention into program, subject to approval and ·

correction by the leader.

As we might **expect, requests** for cooperation rarely

flow laterally to organizational equals. The word ruəmmɯ̄

("cooperate") in Thai normally carries the connotation

of putting oneself at the disposal of another, or under his

orders. Thus, unless an individual or **unit** requesting coop-

eration from another **can establish** his own superiority .

or invoke the **sanction** of an individual superior to the

other, the attempt to initiate joint action is almost

certain to fail. A common **response** in **such an** organizational

context is either to take unilateral action within a

work unit, or to continue with the status quo until higher

leadership notices a problem itself and initiates action.

At Hope of Bangkok and some other Thai organizations this

tendancy is encouraged by statements to the effect that

whatever **one's** complaint or suggestion, the leadership has

su:ely thought of it already. **Disagreements** between units

attempting to **cooperate** can in theory be **ironed** out by

referring the dispute upwards to a point where new policy

covering both units can be set, a policy move that not in-

frequently involves redrawing the lines of authority between

the units to "clarify responsibities." **Alternatively, units** whose cooperation may be

needed on a **project** may be ordered to send representatives

to a meeting of a **coordinating** committee whose decisions

(sometimes **set in** advance by the coordinator) may be final

for the operations of those units. Appeals for **change depend**
on one's **ability to** work the informal system of relations,
just as it would in the Chinese family business, or **in** the
informal clientele systems **within** government **bureaucracies.**
However, since rank and authority in the organization tends
to reflect **degree** of access and approval by higher levels
over the long run, and because of the bureaucratic ethic
of the formal channel, end runs can be risky, easily inter-
preted as a grab for non-legitimate **power and** as such a
threat to the head of the system.

(3) Patron-Client Exchanges

The **primary** good used in building ███████'s clientele
system is his central store of **barami/charisma.** We noted
earlier that patron-client exchanges in Thai society are
built on a **non-formalized** system of dyadic exchange, with
relatively scarce and controllable resources flowing **down-**
wards **from** a superior **in** exchange for less scarce resources
flowing upwards from a collection of inferior individuals.
The scarce resources on which **McGilvary's system was built**
included quinine, Siamese language instruction, access to
the increasingly important **power** center of Bangkok, and a
personal **charisma** of **his** own (note, for example, that the
missionaries were thought uniquely immune **to** the powers of
local spirits. McGilvary **(1912:205-206)** provides an illustra-
tive **instance).** Boonmark's resource was crowd-rousing

evangelists, especially foreign ones, and an extensive
network of personal contacts. ███████'s chief resource
is his own charisma. It is offered in the form of assistance
to aspiring churches and leaders through teaching materials,
leadership training, centrally scheduled speakers and mu-
sicians, and organizational advice, all serving to enhance
a leader's effectiveness in his local setting. Yet the
conditions for receiving this assistance are such that
the charisma itself becomes the basis for and medium of
exchange. For example, a member joining a daughter church
does so to join ███████'s vision, not that of the local
leader. When joining a church or cell, the newcomer is
likely to attach his primary loyalty to the head of the
system and express it by submissiveness and cooperation
with the local representative of the chief, whether that
representative be an assistant pastor, cell leader, or ad-
ministrative coordinator. Thus, the good offered by subor-
dinates in exchange for charisma is submission (in the sense
of immediate and unquestioning responsiveness to the orders
and requests of the superior) and loyalty (expressed by
deference, availability, and personal sacrifice for the
leader and his goals) — the same exchange on which the
traditional Thai government administration had been built
(cf. Akin 1969, 1975).

The charisma flowing downwards enhances the status of

subordinates among their followers. They gain legitimacy,
they can give advice with greater confidence (because
it follows themes and examples set by a leader in whom
one has confidence), and others become more willing to
join with them, to share in the borrowed glow of the center.
A **member** becomes bound to the local cell, for example, not
because of the local cell leader's **personal** ability and
experience (which in some cases **may be** nearly **non-existent),**
but rather because of the **attractiveness** of the powerful
things happening at the center. As a result, individuals
who may not have been able to lead in ministry on their
own can be elevated fairly quickly to positions of authority
and equipped with the borrowed charisma needed to keep
their groups of followers attached and motivated.

In exchange for this borrowed legitimacy, subordinate
leaders respond upwards **with** vocal expressions of support for
the leader and the whole of his policies, **attendance at**
meetings whenever called, provision of requested data to
the extent possible, **acquiescence** to policies even
when they are not understood (and **sometimes** when they
are suspected of being counterproductive, as well), **occa-**
sional undemanding requests for assistance and advice, and
willingness to subordinate personal plans to the sometimes
unexpected redirection of the group's activities from the
top. The subordinate leader is to organize his followers
to respond to organizational needs and directives, and the

organisation in exchange gives **him** the authority and
effectiveness needed to do that work more effectively.

All of **these** exchanges **are cemented** by an ongoing
complex of relationship-building, teaching with heavy em-
phasis on sacrifice and authority, and group activities.
Moreover, in the mind of the subordinate, he is not merely
building an organization or obeying a leader, but he is build-
ing the Kingdom of God. He is not gaining converts, **but**
rather bringing people salvation and a new life. This fact
is likely to be far more salient to him than the details of
organization. So in his mind, he is not bargaining for
power and position, but rather **seeking something that** will
enable him to serve fa** better and help more people find
new life. That something just happens to be the complex
associated with ████████ 's charisma, available only to
those who are sufficiently worthy and of **a** proper attitude.
In this situation, the leader and subordinate respond in
ways that seem natural and proper to them, in accordance with
cultural **norms.** The reader should not confuse the formal
analysis of those **norms** with with the actors' own conceptions
of what they are doing and why.

Nevertheless, a result of these clientele **exchanges,**
being combined as they are with the forms and expectations
of a patriarchal bureaucracy, *leads to* an emulation of the center
at all **levels** of the organization. The **tendancy** of provin-
cial rulers in the traditional Thai polity to duplicate

the forms and administrative arrangements of the royal center **(Tambiah** 1976:135ff**)** is at Hope of Bangkok developed towards its logical conclusion with a conscious push for conformity within. There is assumed to be **a** strength in having everybody **"believe** the same" (mī̄ <u>**khwām chưa thī̄**</u> <u>**khlāi khlāi kan**</u>**),** in having all the churches teach exactly the same cell lessons exactly the s**a**me way, in having church administrations run on the same **patterns.** Cell **leaders** attempt to model themselves on the one who taught them, to the point of using the same teaching examples to make **a** point. At Hope of Chiengmai, foreign observers have remarked that the local leadership are running a somewhat rougher copy of the Bangkok ███████**'s** style (that the Chiengmai pastor's name is also ███████ is pure **coincidence).** "Guide to the Church" books recently produced by Hope of **Chiengmai** and Hope of Pitsanuloke **churches** not only copied their format **from** Hope of Bangkok's original **"Guide,"** but lifted several pages **word-for-word** complete with artwork. In **a Daughter** Church exhibition at Hope of **Bangkok's** Sixth Anniversary Celebration, most churches praised their "assistant pastors" for the same identical qualities — p**e**rseverence, sacrifice, unity with ███████**'s** vision.

Such displays of unity have their price, of **course.** Creativity in such a system is of little value except at the top. Early warning systems of personality conflicts some-times fail to function. Subordinates with their own idea3

and insights **may** find themselves chafing at the **bit.** Even

leaders at the cell level and up may *disappear* from the

system without warning, and without ever **having** expressed

the point of grievance. Systemic lack of downward responsive-

ness to upward **communications,** if allowed to develop too

far, can impede the efforts to generate an impressive out-

ward image. On the other hand, systems such as **this one**

are **almost** a norm in Thailand, complete with their emphasis

on conformity. It seems natural and proper to many partici-

pants. And all things considered, **the system** of "organized

charisma" **that** ████████ operates has been highly effective

in producing/growth so far.
church

(4) Master-Student Relationship

Just north of Bangkok is a new **style** Buddhist monastery

that is drawing thousands of lay devotees to its highly

publicized weekend meditation sessions. A **visiting** obser-

ver will note that the most prominently **displayed** photographs

at this monastery are of the monk, now deceased, who "dis-

covered" the method of meditation taught there. That dis-

covery is in itself insufficient to explain **the** honor ac-

corded the photographs. More important is **that** this monastic

teacher personally instructed the founding abbott **in** the

methods he now teaches.

Teacher-student relationships in Thailand are marked by

a respect lasting throughout life. One can never fully

repay the debt of gratitude to the master who **has** trained one for life and work. Even if the student may later outshine his instructor in position and fame, he should never cease to display the greatest respect for him. The **master-**student **relationship,** like so many in Thailand, is a hierarchical one of superior and **inferior, marked** by formalized symbols of **deference,** precedence, **submissiveness,** and **respect.**

While **pictures** of ████████ 's Australian pastor are not displayed at Hope of Bangkok,[42] the attitude of the respectful student remains evident. "My people submit to me," suggests ████████ , "because I submit to my pastor." Though his pastor has been in Bangkok only three times in four years, and **has** publicly said that he considers himself completely unqualified to tell a Thai how to run a Thai church, Thai members do not seem to consider ████████'s **statement** incongruous. The reason is that the "submission" here means the respect of a student for his master, **a** respect that ████████ continues to express towards this man through a variety of **means.**

Yet ████████'s use of the word **"submit"** instead of "respect" is significant. "Submit" is the word required by the system of church governance **that** both he **and** his former pastor teaches. Yet while the Australian **seems** not to consider his writ of authority to extend into ████████ ██'s church, ████████ continues to exhibit symbols of submission towards his teacher, just as he expects his own

spiritual students to extend them to **himself.** The resulting

implicit linking of the Western concept **of** pastoral authority

with the Thai concepts of the teacher-student **relationship**

and of the **teacher's** authority in the area of his exper-

tise, reinforces the structure of organized charisma at

Hope of Bangkok. As the teacher is assumed to have progressed

farther in his field than any of his students, so also

are the church leaders and **pastor assumed** to have gone .

farther in spiritual matters than those they teach. He

who is the teacher of teachers has progressed farthest

of all.

████ preaching carries himself as a teacher among

students. He personally designed many of the courses taught

at his Bible School. The offering of a **"once** in a lifetime

(maybe) **opportunity"** to join a discipleship course taught

personally by ███ drew hundreds of applicants. Chris-

tian **leaders** joining the movement regularly cite the clarity

and personal usefulness of ███**'s** teachings as **one** of

the reasons for their interest. ███, clearly, is a

teacher of teachers.

Why the Negative Reactions?

There is an implicit assumption **in** the Thai concept

of teacher that the only way to emulate his success is to

sit humbly and submissively at **his** feet as **student.** When

the teacher is a denominational leader and the students

are churches and leaders, such concepts become the stuff
cf **interchurch** conflict. Any move to expose potential stu-
dents to the charisma of the leader may be perceived as
a hostile act. It makes no difference that it is the
student **who always** makes the formal offer **to** establish
a **relationship,** for such has always been the norm of both
teacher-student and patron-client **relationships.**

When *we understand* these concepts, [REDACTED]'s opponents
seem less **likely** *to/is* to be **overreacting** *than they did at first*. The careful reader may
have noticed that when the EFT began proceedings against
[REDACTED], **he** had opened only two daughter churches. When
Hope of **Bangkok's** expulsion **from** EFT was publicly announced,
it had so far planted a total of just four churches. While
some controversy swirled around each of the oases, in itself
it hardly seemed sufficient grounds for a major **split.** Yet
such was the pattern of the growing rift, that Hope of Bang-
kok seems to have anticipated opposition in each of the cases,
and in one case took steps in advance to make it more diffi-
cult for opponents to block a planned church opening.

It **would** appear, therefore, that the new churches
and attitudes of opposition
simply provided an opportunity to **express** opinions/that had
already been formed. Quite simply, many Thai church leaders
are frightened by the structure, strength, and potency of
[REDACTED]'s system. They **recognize** that [REDACTED] as charis-
matic **leader** is possibly invulnerable to attempts to es-
tablish control or **responsiveness** from outside, and **they**

recognize him as a competitor for their own leaders and base of support. The more ███████ prospers, the more precarious their own position becomes, even if ███████ makes no direct or intentional move against them. At least, such is the assumption, one which is reinforced by remembered cases of individuals who have left their churches to go to ██████'s.

Familiar with the rhetoric of hierarchical relations, some may take ███████'s refusal to play the part of defer-ential inferior as declaration of **intent** to become superior and master -- fears in no way alleviated by ██████'s self-proclaimed role of apostle to Thailand, nor by his declared hope of **making** his church the source of nationwide revival.

Thai leaders furthermore see ███████ as a competi-tor for **soarce** resources of members **and** manpower — a com-petitor possessing in his own charisma an advantage the **others** do not **have.** The average leader, aware that he cannot match ██████'s image, charisma, and ability, fears losing the bulk of his members, and possibly **his** entire church. As a result of such fears the amount of transfer growth at ██████'s churches, while certainly greater than the official **figures,**[43] has been wildly exaggerated by persis-tent rumors. According to one such story, ██████ preached by invitation at a camp organized by one of Bangkok's largest churches, and half the youth group almost immediately **trans-**ferred to Hope of Bangkok. This particular story can **be** easily disproved (if the evidence has not **disappeared),**

and Thai Christians are too loyal to their churches to
be so easily persuaded to switch/(in apparent cases to
in any event
the contrary , a move was usually contemplated long before
opportunity presented itself). The story bears witness
nevertheless to the amount of sheer charismatic potency
that ███████'s rivals assume him to possess.

Given current cultural norms, it is not clear whether
current rifts can soon be healed. An acceptance by ███████
████ of the traditional-rational claims to authority of
existing Thai church structures could well destroy the
charisma-based authority system that he himself operates.
On the other hand, official recognition of ███████'s
work and methods would seem to other clientele-oriented
leaders in the Thai church to be an open invitation to
███████ to dominate their own work or, failing that,
to take away their members. To this point, the pressures
on ███████ seem to have brought only an increased deter-
mination to press ahead, to counter the criticisms with
more hard work and growth. As far as I am aware, ███████
has never openly answered his critics in public, although
the well-informed can sometimes detect hidden meanings
in speeches, and leaders from the cell level up are some-
times informed of the official position, to keep them from
being/overly discouraged by criticism that they lose faith
so
in their leader. This is not political posturing, for ███████

███ sincerely believes that in **obedience to** God and as
a **suffering** disciple of Christ he should not answer his
critics. Besides, the only way to stop the criticism, he
suggests, **is** to get even **bigger.** In a society where equals
are rivals and superiors are to be respected, he **may** have
a point — but only if former rivals can be persuaded to
see him as a source of assistance who does not threaten
their freedom or livelihood. That may prove difficult
to do.

CONCLUSION

We have looked at the work of three outstanding leaders
in Thai church history. We have seen each of them working
according to the local **culture's** standards of **leadership,**
particularly in the operation of the traditional clientele-
ship systems. While each had a certain personal charisma,
his skill in channeling that **charisma** in culturally
available channels, however **unintentional,** was also a key
to his **effectiveness.**

There are other examples we could have cited to show
culturally appropriate leadership being applied. For exam-
ple, **Jim Gustafson** of the Evangelical Covenant Church has
established a center at Udorn which within a decade has
come to claim roughly 20 "mother churches" and several
dozen mostly rural "daughter churches" in the Northeast.
Like McGilvary and ████, he operates a strongly central-

ized system with the master teacher at the core and with goods in the form of elder **training,** teaching materials, and program services such as music and drama flowing continually **to** the **peripheries.** A system of daughter churches spawning daughter churches *has* sparked sometimes spontaneous growth, while **intermediate-level leaders** are granted a number of freedoms such as independent voting at EFT meetings, choosing of church **meeting days,** and the like. It is rumored that some of the new churches are really already existing groups of rural Christians. If so, their **adoption** of this new, relatively /dependable patron should not be surprising. Jim, an American raised in Laos, partly preplanned his approach to mission work in **Thailand** in his **M.A. thesis** in **Missiology** at Fuller Theological Seminary **(Gustafson 1970),** and has further adapted his system to Thai culture as he has worked.

Ron **Maddox,** an Assemblies of God missionary, starts churches by holding healing Crusades in the provinces. He says he sometimes takes promising leaders converted in one village and puts them in charge **of** a **church** he is planting in another village, while continuing periodic contact and training from his base in Bangkok. **Assuming** this accurately describes his activities, we could say that Ron operates a clientele **system** that enhances the local **leader's** status among his people first through the borrowed charisma of the Crusade, **then** through a variety of goods and services

provided from the **center.** Moving the leader to a new **village**
allowd him to rise quickly from his former status to be
accepted easily as a leader of converts.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the **Assemblies**
of God have both been blessed by associations with strong
Thai pastors in Bangkok churches who have nationwide in-
fluence. Both missions have taken the wise stance of pro-
viding financial and programming **assistance** while **leaving·**
their pastors a very free hand to develop their work. Pastors
Nirut and **Wiradhai** both write books, plant churches, organ-
ize Crusades and camps, and are building personal organiza-
tions for leadership and growth. While both are theoretically
mere individuals in their respective denominations, they are
dominant figures, and the **denominational** structures are
sufficiently loose as to give local leaders room to work.

The growth patterns of a number of groups still deserve
study. These include the Christian and Missionary Alliance
(CMA) from 1946-1960, **the** Seventh Day Adventists from 1945
to the present, Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) from
1960 to the present, Southern Baptists (Thailand Baptist
Mission) from 1952 to the late 1960s, and Overseas Missionary
Fellowship **(OMF)** from 1953 to the mid-1970s. According to
the figures and charts in Smith (1982), all of these groups
showed at least **10%** annual growth in work among ethnic
Thai for the period (although the early Southern Baptist
work seems to have included a strong Chinese focus). It is

not known what role leadership patterns may have ployed in the growth of these groups.

In any **event,** it should be remembered that leadership structures are but one growth factor among **many,** and that cultural appropriateness is **hypothesized** as merely a neces-sary (not **sufficient)** *condition for* growth. In other words, where strong growth is found, we expect **some culturally appropriate** patterns **to** be operating, but **do** not expect them to be suf-ficient to explain the **growth. Other** factors will be working to generate the growth that is **channeled** along these systems. For example, in ████████ 's case a powerful personal charisma, ritual structure, and a teaching system aimed at thoroughly reshaping world view and behavior are more significant in **generating a steady** influx of converts and incorporating them into the Christian **community.** *They are the leadership patterns.* It should be remembered as well that leadership patterns are patterns of **behavior,** not of ideology or conscious intent. We have shown in a couple of instances that conscious motivation was quite **different** from the exchange seen in the underlying pattern. It could be suggested, in fact, **that the continuing** operation of a clientele system depends on its exchanges not being perceived as exchanges. **Thus, researchers attempting to analyze leader-ship** patterns **should be careful** to distinguish intent from reality, and it may be difficult for ~~them~~ *churches and missions* to get **sufficient** distance from their subject to analyze their own work.

✱   ✱   ✱   ✱   ✱

But what, then, of **Smalley's** suggestion at the start of

this paper that "often missionaries do not like the product
of true indigeneity in church governance? (1979:35-36)
What is the record for Thailand? Although some of the cases
mentioned in the conclusion have gained respect and inter-
est, that interest tends to focus more on their forms (e.g.
Jim Gustafson's use of Thai-style church music) than on
the relational patterns of their leadership. Our three
main case studies support Smalley's challenge further.
We saw that McGilvary's attitudes and relational patterns
were discontinued by successors such as Dodd. Boonmark had
a decade-long running battle with his own mission and lost.
Missionaries have been more guarded in their criticisms of
█████████ than some Thai leaders have, but many also express
strong ambivalence about him.

Part of the problem is that culturally appropriate
leadership structures are not so easily seen and learned
as the more formalized patterns of culture. such as how to
greet, where to touch, and where not to point your feet.
The foreigner is first warned of relational. norms by that
unpleasant suspicion that something undefinable is going
amiss. If by some accident he acts appropriately, he may
continue and prosper without knowing why, and look elsewhere
for ways to indigenize. One far too easily confuses the forms
of indigeneity with its substance, because the forms are.
more easily observed. Yet the most indigenous of organiza-
tions may paradoxically be that which at first glance appears
most foreign.

The problem was put well in an internal document written by a veteran missionary who had recently joined Hope of Bangkok's staff. Missionaries are likely to experience more severe cultural adjustment problems at Hope of Bangkok than they would elsewhere, he noted. In most missions, the forms of the work are relatively Thai, while the organization in which the missionary works is run in a Western style. But at Hope of Bangkok, the forms are Western, while the structures of administration are completely Thai.

It catches you by surprise, he said.

NOTES, p. 1

1. Missionary sources from this period apply the term I
   to all the various Thai-related lowland cultures ran
   across northern and northeastern Thailand, and exten
   into Laos, the Burmese Shan States, and into souther
   Yunnan. The Northern Thai culture centered on Chieng
   where McGilvary worked, differed in a number of ways
   from the northeastern cultures today known as Lao an
   Thai-Lao, including the distinctive historical tradi
   of the Lannathai Kingdom, and its own distinctive sc:
   Nevertheless, following the usage of that day, I wil
   use the terms Lao and Northern Thai interchangably wl
   referring to McGilvary's work.

2. This patron later gained official government support
   his activities in the form of a Mutual Aid Society (;
   funded), with himself as the salaried Director. The
   State had little idea of the social statement this me
   in the refugee community, of course.

3. My own ineptness at operating in clientelist systems
   resulted in some extended periods of conflict with ir
   dividuals who considered themselves of superior statt
   in . a. Thai volunteer organization in which I was ser
   Those who perceived themselves of inferior status, or
   other hand, tended to respond with relative warmth to
   what I had thought was a consistent approach to both
   groups (I could not yet distinguish them from each
   other, of course).

4. Bradley's contributions in medicine, printing, and jo
   nalism make him the best known Protestant missionary
   Thailand. Although he gained few converts himself, hi
   reputation and his personal contacts with the elite a
   royalty helped pave the way for later missionaries su
   as his son-in-law McGilvary. For more on Bradley, see
   Lord (1969) and Bradley (1981).

5. These growth rates are calculated from the membership
   figures listed in Swanson (1984:170).

6. My figures on the number of missionaries on the field
   are estimated from the listings in Chatichai (1984:
   43-52).

7. In other words, the rate of increase in membership was
   slower than the natural increase of the population.

8. Boonmark served 14 years as the top Thai administrator
   in the CCT. prior to his resignation in 1948.
   From 1934-1937 he was officially assistant to Mrs.
   Bertha Blount McFarland, the American missionary

NOTES, p. 2

who served as the first General Secretary. Boonmark
was General Secretary with Bertha as assistant *in* the
next term leading up to World War Two, after which the
assistant's position was discontinued (Prasith 1984:173).
Smith's description of Boonmark's position in CCT as
Moderator (1982:213-218) appears to be an error. It is
an understandable one, since the General Secretary had
the chief administrative position, and thus the greatest
practical influence on church affairs.

9. The median average Sunday attendance of responding churches
was less than 40 (Pairoj 1985:7-8).

10. Chai Samarn Church is associated with the Pentecostal
Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). Many foreign visitors know
it better by the sign on Soi 6 (Chai Samarn), Sukhumwit
Road identifying it as the "Full Gospel Church."

11. It is not uncommon for Thai churches to have memberships
exceeding attendance. In some cases membership is more
than double attendance. An estimate of the number of
Christians actually to be found in church on a given
Sunday in Bangkok has yet to be compiled.

12. He was converted through the work of Southern Baptist
missionaries, who began work in Thailand shortly after
World War Two (cf. Smith 1982:222). The Southern Baptists
are known in Thailand as the Thailand Baptist Mission,
registered independently of both the CCT and the Evan-
gelical Fellowship of Thailand. They are not to be
confused with the Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellow-
ship, which is composed of American Baptist missionaries
working mostly with CCT churches.

13. The Presbyterian system appears to have divided members
among organized northern Thai churches on a territorial
basis. Thus, the Chiengmai Church, defined as such by
the existence of an officially ordained board of ruling
elders, included members scattered throughout the pro-
vince, most of whom could rarely afford the several
days' trip to the urban center. Chapels within a church's
more distant territories compensated by providing local
centers for worship and social contact and support,
even though the Presbytery would not yet officially
ordain elders.

14 Dr. ████████ would use a similar strategy some 90 years
later in his Thailand Bible Seminary, with great effect.

NOTES, p. 3

15. Though some modern interpreters suggest the "religio₁
    in the formula means loyalty to the religion of one';
    own choosing, King Vajiravudh's own statements seemed
    to draw a clear distinction between "Thai" Buddhism
    and "foreign" religions such as Christianity (cf.
    Prasith 1984:49-50; Smith 1982:175-176).

16. It was originally known as the Church of Christ in Si
    as the nation's name had not yet been changed to
    Thailand.

17. It is outranked, according to the latent available
    figures, by the predominantly Chinese Maitrichit and
    Saphan Luang churches, both in Bangkok and also membe
    of the CCT.

18. By comparison, there were a total of only 756 church
    members in all of Thailand in 1935 (Bill Smith, Thail
    Baptist Mission, personal communication). The crowds
    quoted for Sung are suspiciously large, however. The
    500 capacity (at most) auditorium of Boonmark's Bangk
    Church was said to be the largest when constructed
    over a decade after World War Two, although Blanford
    claims that title for the auditorium of the Saphan
    Luang Church, completed 1954, with a claimed capacit
    of 1000 (1975:42). Blanford notes that Maitrichit's
    auditorium, completed in 1935, seats only 400. This
    was presumably the site of Sung's first Thailand Crusa
    (1975:34)

19. Other accounts of Sung's work can be found in Lyall
    (1961) and in Smith (1982:195-197). Prasith's treat-
    ment of John Sung's Thailand visits and their after-
    math (1984: 82-88) is by far the best, and deserves
    translation into English.

20. In 1937 Mrs. Withayakhom (Bertha Blount McFarland) wrc
    that 99.5% of the Thai Christians had neither knowledg
    nor interest in the workings of the new church govern-
    ance structures (Prasith 1984:70). Note Rev. Pluang's
    comments above on p. 47.

21. It is significant that the proposed school was to be
    headed by a missionary supporter of Sung rather than
    by a Thai. The move was not anti-foreign, but rather
    an attempt to give the Thai leadership control over th
    way in which its next generation would be trained.

NOTES, p. 4

22. This action effectively legalized all that Boonmark
    had done over the previous two years.

23. Prasith (1984) appears to give this group exclusive
    credit for keeping the church alive and active through
    the war.

24. Boonmark had had previous contact with ICC's founder,
    Dr. Carl McIntyre, translating for him when he had
    spoken in Thailand earlier. It is possible that these
    contacts influenced Boonmark in such as way as to in-
    crease the heat of his conflicts.

25. In one recent case, denominational leaders started a
    rival church of their own within a few blocks of an
    existing pastor whose successes and adoption of Pen-
    tecostal teaching had made him nearly immune to
    denominational controls.

26. Shaffer (1974:32) spells his name "Osborn," while Smith
    (1982:252) opts for "Osborne." I do not know which is
    correct, because all the other citations I have heard
    have been oral.

27. In Trang, Osborne's meetings led to the conversion of
    a Chinese woman whose daughter would later marry the
    future Rev. Dr. █████████.

28. Charan claims it could seat 500, making it the largest
    Thai church in the city at the time. Although Blanford
    (1975:42) claims a larger capacity for the Sanam Luang
    church completed in 1954, this was still almost exclu-
    sively a Chinese-language church at the time.
    Boonmark, incidentally, seems to have never pastored
    a "Chinese church," despite the claims of Smith (1982:
    252).

29. Along this line, it is significant that one of the
    advantages the Pentecostals are accused of having
    used to gain members is "good speakers."

30. Not exactly a voluntary move, several have suggested
    privately that this was caused by a personal indis-
    cretion on Boonmark's part.

31. Boonmark died in May 1987, some 90 years old.
    The UPC is still reported to have head offices in Bangkok.
    It is reportedly led by Rev. Chaiyong, who had been one
    of Boonmark's lieutenants. The UPC never joined the EFT,
    and so is no longer listed in any Christian Directory.
    I have so far failed to contact UPC at its most recent number.

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32. Two of **CCT's** districts today are organized in line with
    Baptist doctrine and governance structures. There are
    also missionaries from Anglican, Disciples, and Lutheran
    bodies as well. **Furthermore,** several CCT congregations
    •are known **to** be charismatic, some apparently **having**
    been so since the days of **Boonmark's** initial involve-
    ment with the Pentecostal movement.

33. The strength of this influence and its associated values
    led **one** Thai anthropologist to joke privately that
    Thai youth today known **"disco** culture" better than
    they know Thai culture.

34. In a gross **example,** a textbook required at the main
    Open University for a recent course on Thai **local**
    government devoted a major portion of its pages to
    discussion of American county government. The professor,
    naturally, had done his **M.A.** studies in California.

35. Fluency in English, preferably with **some** foreign edu-
    cation, is considered essential to get better-paying
    jobs.

36. Dr. Henry Briedenthal had been a driving force in **the**
    establishment of Bangkok Bible College in **1970,** and
    was himself widely respected as a Bible teacher.

37. While Pairoj does not mention Hope of Bangkok by name
    in the report, he has confirmed in person that this
    was in fact the church referred to.

38. The stories I personally attempted to verify at the **time**
    tended to contain just enough accurate information to
    enable one to identify the characters **and/or** the event
    sparking the **rumor.** The rest had usually been greatly
    distorted by guesswork and intent to defame.

39. Hope of Bangkok did not join EFT until late **1984.** Even
    then, church leadership would have preferred official
    registration with the government as a separate religious
    foundation, in hopes of minimizing outside interference
    in internal affairs.

40. **KC's** name was included, **reportedly** with his reluctance,
    on this committee. It does not **seem** to have functioned,
    however.

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41. The reader may have noticed that membership grew much
    faster than attendance over this period. Nevertheless,
    the rising membership indicates the large number becoming
    Christians and becoming initially involved in cell
    groups over the period, since converts tended not to
    sign up for membership until having attended a few
    weeks. Thus, the nationwide problem of retantion of
    converts remains a problem even at Hope of Bangkok
    (cf. Johnstone(1986:406) on the nationwide "backsliding"
    problem. Smith's criticism of the CCT's and CMA's re-
    tention rates (1982:158, 233-235) could probably have
    applied to all groups, had figures been made available
    and examined.).

42. Church leaders would certainly want to avoid the
    religious veneration that such "images" tend to
    attract in Thailand.

43. Officially reported figures based on a random sample
    in mid-February based on the data from 1820 membership
    applications, showed that 81% of applicants had become
    Christians at Hope of Bangkok, and only 11% said that
    they had ever been members elsewhere. The church's
    new membership drive had already inflated the lists
    with applicants who failed to become permanently active,
    however. If we assume (and the evidence does not exist
    to prove this) that most of the Christians transferring
    from elsewhere remained active, then from the above
    figures we could estimate the percentage in church on
    a given Sunday who transferred from elsewhere as high
    as 30-35%. This is slightly lower than an estimate I
    made in late 1985 on the basis of a complete survey of
    700 membership forms. A high number of incomplete member-
    ship forms makes both figures of questionable value,
    however.

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