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**MEEKNESS: A NEW APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN WITNESS  
TO THE THAI PEOPLE**

by

**Nantachai Mejudhon**

dissertation submitted in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree,

Doctor of **Missiology**

**E. Stanley Jones School** of World Mission and Evangelism

**Asbury** Theological Seminary

November 1997

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## DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation, entitled  
**MEEKNESS: A NEW APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN WITNESS  
TO THE THAI PEOPLE**

written by

Nantachai **Mejudhon**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of **Missiology**

has been read and approved by the undersigned members of the

Faculty of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and

**Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary**



Darrell L. Whiteman



A.H. Mathias Zahniser

November 1997

### Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with the meek approach in **Christian** witness in Thailand. This study develops an **alternative approach of evangelism appropriate for** use in Thailand by combining theoretical frameworks and models of intercultural **communication**. These theoretical frameworks intend to solve the problem of the **Christian** church in Thailand where Christian witness is viewed as having violated the cultural and religious values of reciprocity and harmony by its use of aggressive methods and is now deprived of the opportunity to initiate dialogue about the gospel. Criteria for locating meek or aggressive witnessing are derived from nine value clusters of the psychology of the Thai and eight cultural domains of Thais and Americans developed by Thai and American scholars. These criteria are used to evaluate Christian witness of missionaries and Thai Christians (Roman Catholics and Protestants) in early and modern missions, and the interview results of contemporary missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists to determine whether they worked positively toward or negatively against the meek **approach**. The meek approach was derived from a combination of library, historical, and interview research. The meek approach requires: (1) positive attitudes toward **Buddhism** and Thai culture, (2) genuine and sincere relationships with Buddhists, (3) presentation of the gospel showing benefits and help, rather than confrontation and threat, (4) a longer time for diffusion of the gospel, and (5) indigenous strategies for communication of the gospel. **Missiological** applications help to clarify how the meek approach can be used in real life situations in Thailand.

For **Ubolwan**--easy to **fall** in love with, easy to keep in love with.

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## CHAPTER 1

### God Help Missionaries

#### Introduction

All textbooks on the history of Christian mission in Thailand mention low percentages of Christian conversion. The Roman Catholic priests came to Thailand in **1511** (Jeng 1983:90). They planted only six churches during their 300 years of mission work (Wells **1958:5**). The first attempt to propagate Protestantism in **Siam** seems to have been in the **early** part of the nineteenth century (**Latourette** 1944:243). The first missionary of Protestantism came to Siam in **1828** (Kim **1974:39**). The first Thai convert appeared in **1859**, nineteen years after the American Presbyterian church entered in **1840** and remained faithful (Kane 1978:97). Even after **165** years of aggressive evangelism, professing Christians still numbered only 0.6 percent in 1980 (Barrett 1982:664).

This study investigates the cultural and religious behavior **pattern** of "meekness" and suggests utilization of this **pattern** as the new approach to Christian witness for missionaries and Thai Christians. **I** will determine if there is something culturally inappropriate with past as well as present approaches to Christian witness that missionaries and Thai Christians have used for perhaps the last century related to ignoring or undervaluing this cultural and religious **pattern**.

Thai people are characteristically kind and gentle. Missionaries are welcomed wholeheartedly and can preach anywhere. There has been no persecution of missionaries in Thailand. The **government** donates much money each year to Christian organizations in Thailand. The constitution provides freedom for all religions, and missionaries can preach in public places. The

number of foreign missionaries is strictly controlled, however. Presently, there are approximately **1,000** missionaries and sixty Christian organizations in Thailand. All missions seem to experience the same **reception--friendliness** and good will, but an almost unalterable repugnance to the idea of conversion (Neill 1990:293). The growth in all churches is **very** slow.

These statistics have bothered not only me but missionaries and Thai leaders for **many** decades. I came to **Asbury** Theological Seminary to study for the **Doctor of Missiology** degree in **1994**. After taking five core courses, I began to have suspicions as to the source of the problem. While missionaries and Christian leaders in Thailand sincerely preached and taught the Word of God to the **Thai**, it could be that they did not consider seriously Thai culture and values in their **cross-cultural** communication. They used **Western** methodologies and strategies which the Thai considered to be foreign and aggressive, and this affected the relationship between the missionaries and their hearers. They used one-way communication instead of dialogue.

**Missionaries'** attitudes toward **Buddhism**, the predominant religion in Thailand, have often been negative, and some consider Buddhism evil. In the nineteenth century, Siam was the only country in Asia which succeeded in fully maintaining its political independence from aggressive **Western** powers (Latourette 1944:240). **Historically**, Thailand also has successfully maintained its spiritual independence in spite of **aggressive, Western** missionary strategies by simply using the cultural and religious behavior **pattern** of meekness as a **shield** to escape spiritual colonization.

In the same manner, I believe that the Christian church in Thailand is viewed as having violated the cultural and religious values of reciprocity and harmony by its use of aggressive methods and is now deprived of the

opportunity to initiate dialogue about the gospel. This leads me to state the problem and the hypotheses of the dissertation.

#### Statement of the Problem

The **historical** record of Christian witness in Thailand and the responses of **missionaries**, Thai Christians, and Thai Buddhists to interviews designed to get their opinion on Christian witness in Thailand will be evaluated against a set of Thai cultural values and against a model of **sharing** the gospel stressing the meekness required by the cultural values

#### Hypotheses

The problem mentioned above leads me to propose two hypotheses. First, the responsiveness of Thai Buddhists to Christian witness is related to their perception of the value of meekness. Second, when meekness is demonstrated by missionaries and Thai Christians, Thai Buddhists will be more responsive.

In this study, I will look at reasons why Thais came to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and why they did not. I have been interested to see if meekness plays a very important role in the Christian witness. Historical research of the methods used in evangelization shows a poor understanding of the Thai practice of meekness on the part of those who witnessed. A look at current practices of evangelization reveals that similar methods today bring similar results. This was discovered by interviewing Thai Buddhists who recently heard about Christ and came to know the Lord through foreign missionaries and local Christians.

Knowing how to deal with the problem will help missionaries and Thai Christians adjust their approach, especially when initiating dialogue and when using Scriptures to witness to the Thai people.

I do not favor completely eliminating aggressive methods of witness. For example, I favor continued use of preaching to Buddhists, which generally they would consider aggressive. Preaching was an important means of proclaiming the gospel in the New Testament. But missionaries always seem to preach aggressively to the Thai, and the results have not been fruitful. Perhaps if the gospel can be preached in a meek way to the Thai, Thai people will respond to the gospel, especially those who have developed a good relationship with Christians. I realize also that some aggressive methods may work well with some people. However, the percentage of Thai professing Christians, which number less than 1 percent after 165 years, tells me that while aggressive methods may be the norm for witnessing to the Thai at present, this may not be the best approach.

### Theoretical Framework

This study develops an **alternative** method of evangelism appropriate for use in Thailand by combining the theoretical frameworks and models of intercultural communication of **Carley H. Dodd (1995:6)**, the elenctic witness in cross-cultural study of religion of **J.H. Bavinck (1960:247-272)**, and the model of vulnerability of elenctic witness offered by **Mathias Zahniser (1994:71-78)**.

Success in **intercultural** communication depends on three factors: culture, personality, and the interpersonal relationships between the receiver and the sender (Dodd 1995:6).

Effective intercultural communication begins with recognition that a focus on task alone is insufficient. Communication relationships must be planted,

watered, and cultivated along with our task orientation for successful intercultural communication experiences (Dodd 1995:15).

Many people simply avoid the difficult task of communicating with someone from a culture different than their own. Assuming the burden for making the attempt is an important first step in improving intercultural communication skills. When **intercultural** communication breakdowns occur, one should try to take responsibility for finding creative ways of solving the problem (Dodd 1995:15).

Dodd provides a comparison of a number of cultural values between North Americans and Asians. He also suggests a guide for communicators to improve their communication skills. Dodd's suggestions help people to come closer to each other and listen to each other seriously.

Dodd suggests that the sender of the message should assume the burden of communication (Dodd 1995:15). Communication with a person from a different culture poses proportionately more ambiguities and uncertainties. Some form of predictability is needed to combat the uncertainty. Dodd suggests that the first phase of reducing uncertainty involves precontact impression formation. Communicators reduce uncertainty on a simple and efficient level during this first phase (Dodd 1995:21).

Dodd developed a guide to overcome cultural differences as **follow**: (1) try to look beyond surface conditions, such as dress, custom, and environmental conditions, (2) develop a curiosity about the **internal** dimensions of culture, such as cultural structure, cultural thought **patterns** and logic, and cultural relationships, and (3) discover ways that relationship affects content and content affects relationship (Dodd 1995: 28-29).

In this study, a comparison between American and Thai values will indicate problems of intercultural communication. The character of the Thai **nine-value** clusters, recently researched by Suntaree Komin (1991:132-218), reveals various facets of Thai meekness. We will see how application of the character of the Thai nine-value clusters can help missionaries in their strategies of witnessing to the Thai.

**Bavinck's** main feature of an elenctic approach to evangelism (1960:247-272) rests upon the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. The elenctic approach to evangelism accepts the responsibility for mediating and acknowledging conviction in one's self and in the community of faith. To be really able to convict anyone else of sin, a person must know himself, and the hidden comers of his heart very well. The Holy Spirit first convicts us, and then through us he convicts the world. Anyone who in humility lets the **Holy** Spirit convince him of his sins may be the means by which the Holy Spirit discloses to others the hidden sources of their willingness to really take God seriously. And anyone who does not take God seriously cannot take himself seriously (Bavinck 1960:272). When Christians are meek, the Holy Spirit draws them to himself. By this way, he draws also Buddhists to come closer to him. Elenctics receive the greatest support from repeated awareness that the sharpest weapons must in the first place be **turned** against ourselves (Bavinck 1960:271). Like the proclamation approach, elenctics seeks to bring about conviction in the minds and hearts of others. The dialogical approach seeks to relate to others as neighbors and equals, regarding their beliefs as worthy of serious consideration and making an **earnest** effort to **comprehend** and appreciate them. Dodd's theories include several examples of cultural meekness in intercultural

communication, while Bavinck's theory illustrates a religious behavior **pattern** of meekness.

**Zahniser** goes further in developing the meekness approach by introducing the role of vulnerability in elenctics (the witness that is concerned with the convincing and convicting work of the Holy Spirit) (1994:71-78). The idea is to open our minds, our lives, and ourselves so we can **learn** more from the Thai. By doing so, both their **lives** and ours will reach a point of unity where we can begin to understand, **love**, and help each other. Zahniser provides three crucial dimensions of Christian witness among **non-Christians** (especially Muslims): **(1)** the importance of intimate dialogue, **(2)** the work of God's Spirit in **prevenient** grace, and **(3)** the role of vulnerability **in** being convincing. Taken together, these dimensions, Zahniser suggests, compose an approach or model for evangelism which he calls, "**close encounters of the vulnerable kind**" (Zahniser 1994:72).

My concept of the word "**meekness**" is derived from the examination of Scripture passages where Hebrew, Greek, and Thai terms are used. The definition of the word appears in the section of the definition of terms. The in-depth study of this term comes later in Chapter 6.

The concept of meekness also is derived from the analysis of the Thai culture. I observed several **patterns** of witness in Scripture, and the meekness approach may be examined and used as example. I use The Psychology of the Thai People: Values and Behavioral **Patterns** (1991), written by Dr. Suntaree Komin, A Common Core: Thais and Americans (1989) by John Paul Fieg, and Christian Witness to Buddhists: A Report of the **Consultation** on World **Evangelization**, Mini-Consultation on **Reaching** Buddhists (1980) by The

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE). These sources helped identify Thai cultural and religious values, and offered guidance on how to apply these values in a Thai context. These elements of meekness demonstrated in behaviors will be used as a summary of characteristic elements found in a meekness approach to witnessing for examining the behavioral **patterns** of missionaries and Thai leaders who witnessed to the Thai from **1511-1980** as well as to construct interview questions for future research.

Or. Suntaree **Komin** is a Fulbright scholar. Or. **Komin** is a Thai. After receiving her **Ph.D.** from the University of Hawaii, she spent ten years in Thailand doing important research about the psychology of the Thai people.

Paul Fieg is a scholar who worked in Thailand as an American Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand for many years. Fieg divided Thai cultural values into eight domains: **(1)** concept of time, **(2)** concept of work and play, **(3)** concept of youth vs. age, **(4)** concept of equality vs. hierarchy and rank, **(5)** concept of materialism vs. **spirituality**, **(6)** concept of change vs. tradition, **(7)** concept of confrontation vs. indirection (avoidance), and **(8)** concept of dependence vs. independence. I will examine the differences between American values and Thai values for each domain. I want to show the contrast between Thai and American cultural values in those eight domains, because the majority of missionaries in Thailand, both past and present, are Americans. The resulting comparison will produce a number of elements of meekness which in **turn** will serve as a summary of characteristic **elements** found in a meekness approach to witnessing for pursuing answers to the two hypotheses.

The Thailand report on Christian Witness to Buddhists **(1980)** is one of a series of Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) emerging from the historic

Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) held in Pattaya, Thailand in June 1980. The report deals with the two basic schools of Buddhist thought: Theravada (**Hinayana**, the **Southern** School) and **Mahayana** (the Northern School). The report provides vital communication issues and principles for practical strategies and encourages meekness in Christian witnessing.

By doing historical research on evangelism in Thailand and forming a summary of the characteristic elements in meekness of Thai values, I was able to identify the approach of aggression in Christian witnessing. The diary of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an American missionary to Siam (**Feltus** 1936), demonstrates aggressive witnessing. The model of **Western** powers as recorded by Kenneth Scott Latourette in A History of the Expansion of Christianity (Vol. 6) demonstrates aggression to the Thai (Latourette 1944:240).

Dr. Bradley's diary and **Latourette's** A History of the Expansion of Christianity (Vol. 6) give clues as to why the gospel did not spread in Thailand. Dr. Bradley's diary illustrates the theology of mission among missionaries during **1835-1873**, especially related to Buddhism. Latourette pointed out that Buddhism in Thailand does not have strong animistic **enclaves**. The prevailing religion was Buddhism of a Hinayana type. Here, in Ceylon and Burma, it offered effective opposition to the rapid spread of Christianity (Latourette **1944:241**). One of the reasons is that the Hinayana type lacks a concept of the **Judeo-Christian God (non-theistic)** (LCWE **1980:5**). Latourette thought that was the main reason why the gospel did not spread in Thailand. He saw the problem in part. The mixture of Buddhism and animism generates two more problems which Latourette did not mention. These are: (1) the religious

**problem**, and (2) the cultural **problem**. First, Buddhism brought not **only** a non-theistic concept but a high ethical standard, a non-violence and non-aggression concept to the Thai (Lamb 1966:24). I have been interested to see if these concepts caused meekness to reign in the people's hearts. Addressing the cultural problem generated by animism, M.R. Krukrit **Pramoj**, one of the great Thai philosophers, says, Thais are very tribal, closed communities; foreigners are not allowed. **Well**, they are allowed but there is a wall there somewhere, a dividing line they never really get **inside**"(Beek 1983:205).

These two major problems need a meekness approach to bring missionaries and Thai Christians through that unseen wall and past the dividing line in order to present Jesus Christ to the Thai people.

#### Definition of Terms

##### Siam

Siam is the old name of Thailand. Before **1939**, Thailand was known as Siam to the rest of the world. All documents and letters written prior to **1939** used "**Siam**" for the country and "**Siamese**" for the people. Generally speaking, the people referred to themselves as "**Thai**" or "**Tai**" and to their country as "**Pratate Thai**," i.e. "**Thailand**." Because the people have always been Thai but known as Siamese prior to **1939**, historical references to them can be expressed by either term. No significant ethnic diversity exists among the population of Thailand (e.g. 1.3% Khmer, 1.3% Kui, 0.6% Sui, 0.4% Karen, 0.4% Phutai, 0.3% Mon, 0.3% Lu, 0.2% **Khmu**, 0.2% **Shan**, and 0.2% Indian) (Barrett 1982:664). Thais (**77.7%**), Chinese (**12.1%**), and Malay (4.0%) comprise the three major people groups and numerous smaller groups, most of

the later being small mountain **tribal** groups (Johnstone 1993:530), make up the remaining population. Thais, Chinese, and Malay are considered to be Thais. Laos who live in the Northeast are also Thais.

### Meekness

Meekness and humility are usually used to show the state or quality of the heart or the inner life while gentleness is used as the product of that quality of life. Gentleness can be seen in many forms while meekness and humility are the meanings of those forms (**Galatians 5:23**).

A meek or a humble person always draws closer to humans and to God and causes others to do the same despite circumstances so that the will and the purpose of God can be fulfilled through him or her **for** the whole community. This can be seen in **Jesus'** life and the teaching of the Scriptures.

Meekness can be seen in Jesus' life. Jesus is meek (**Matthew 11:29**). He demonstrated his meekness by emptying himself, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men (**Philippians 2:7**). Jesus drew himself closer to humanity despite existing in the form of God (**Philippains 2:6**) in order that he might bring us to God (**I Peter 3:18**). He commanded his followers to do the same thing by giving the Holy Spirit to them (**Matthew 28:19-20**; **John 14:16**). The gift of the Spirit generates meekness (**Galatians 5:23**) and Jesus is meek. He is 100 percent **God-man**. He called people to himself and to love one another as he loves them. "**Come** unto me," Jesus said, "**For I** am gentle and humble in heart and you shall find rest unto your **souls**" (**Matthew 11:28-29**). Jesus sent us into the world to do the same thing (**John 17:18**).

Meekness is the imperishable quality of Christian hearts, especially in the hearts of Christian teachers (**I Peter 3:4**; **Colosians 3:12**; **II Timothy 2:5**).

Biblical meekness involves entering into people's **worlds--their** thought world, their heart-world, and the world of their social reality, as Christ entered our world to reach us and draw us closer to himself and to one another. The meaning of this word will be shown in detail in Chapter 6.

### **Agressiveness**

In this study, I use the words "**aggressive**" and "**aggressiveness**" frequently. The general meaning of the terms for purpose of this research is absence of the characteristics of meekness.

In the Thai cultural context, missionaries or Thai Christian nationals are considered aggressive when they show impoliteness rather than gentleness in correcting the ideas of the Thai **receptors**. Cultural sins committed by missionaries are considered aggression to the Thai.

Aggression implies the absence of a lowly spirit or a lack of patience in a difficult situation. Missionaries who are easily irritated are considered aggressive by the Thai. Comparing religions, looking down upon Buddhism, and encouraging Buddhists to disregard Buddha images are considered aggression. Missionaries who do not allow enough time for Buddhists to think about and understand the gospel are also considered to be aggressive.

Many missionaries dump the gospel message **cognitively** upon the Thai all at once. If they expect the Thai to express their faith in Christ after using their verbal persuasion, this is seen as aggression by the Thai. Teaching moral and religious values and witnessing to older persons are considered aggressive behavior as well. In a face-to-face culture, **missionaries** who witness to the Thai without establishing preliminary relationships with them are considered to be aggressive.

## Witness

The general use of the word "**witness**" means to show or evidence by behavior or to bear witness to by speech or conduct (Webster **1957:2942**). It derives from a Greek word, ***Martyros***, which signifies one who sealed his testimony with his blood, as did Stephen and Antipas (Acts 22:20; Revelation 2:13) (Davis **1954:821**). Those who attest to truths about God are called witnesses (John **3:11**, 32; 8:18) as **well** as those who testified to what they saw or heard **concerning** Jesus (Luke 24:48; Acts **1:8**).

Finally, something must be said about the importance of the witness motif for communicators of the Christian message. Three features may be mentioned, coming from biblical contexts (Brown 1986:1042-1051). First, witnesses are passionately **involved** in the case they seek to present. Like their first-century predecessors, they cannot help but speak of what they have seen and heard. Second, witnesses are held accountable for the truthfulness of their testimony. This means they are driven back to the Scriptures as the standard whereby their witness is to be judged. Third, witnesses must be faithful not only to the facts of **Christ-events**, but also to their meaning. This entails presenting Christ and his message with the significance which genuinely belongs to them. To be faithful witnesses, we must ever keep before us and before our hearers "**the** fully rounded, finely balanced, many sided, yet unitary significance of Christ"(Brown **1986:1049-1050**).

① The specific character of the Johannine concept of witness is the person's testimony to or of Christ in pointing to Jesus, in Jesus' testimony to himself, and in reference to Jesus in the proclamation of the disciples

(Brown 1986:1042-1051). The Christian's basic concern, however, is not to compare religious systems per se but to lead men and women to know Christ, who is the **"end of the Law."** Christ alone is the solution to humanity's problem (Romans 10:3-4). The focus is changed from the comparison of religions to dynamic interaction with the **supernatural** person of God. Communicating the person of Christ, not Christianity as a religion, is our task in Christian witness (LCWE 1980:6).

### Absorption

The word **"absorption"** in this dissertation is **concerned** with the appropriate attitude of missionaries and Thai Christians toward Buddhism and Buddhists in Christian witness in Thailand. This attitude leads missionaries and Thai Christians to open their minds and hearts to carefully study Buddhism and Thai cultural values and allow these values to shape the presentation of the gospel so that Christian witness will not be culturally inappropriate, intellectually confusing, and spiritually stale.

The practice of absorption which can lead to losing the orthodox meaning of the **gospel** which the Catholic community tried in Ban Song Yae, Yasothom province, Thailand, is not the meaning of the word used in this dissertation. The practice of absorption which leads to syncretism or dualism as expressed by the mixing of Hinduism with Buddhism in India, as mentioned in this chapter, is not the meaning of the word in this dissertation.

### A Meekness Approach to Witnessing

A meekness approach in witnessing is **concerned** with contextualizing the presentation of the gospel by applying Thai cultural and religious values in Christian witness. It involves a humble attitude like Jesus'. A meekness

approach to witnessing aims to draw Buddhists **closer** to **Christ**, not to push them **further** away from **him**. It lacks elements of aggressiveness when judged by the Thai. It flows smoothly along the grain of Thai culture. It creates less friction in **cross-cultural** communication. This approach denies an attitude of looking down upon Buddhism. A longer time of Christian witness is involved. Genuine relationship is also required. The gospel presentation should benefit and help Buddhists. This approach seeks to demonstrate **Christlikeness** through Christian lifestyles so that the Thai may evaluate Christianity by themselves. It allows the Holy Spirit to convict the hearers of the gospel freely. The presentation of the gospel in words is required by this approach, but it discourages human pushiness to move Buddhists to **Christ**. Those who seek to do a major overhaul of religious grids in the minds of the Thai by imposing the new grid of Christianity without explaining the power of the gospel to touch people's needs are not considered meek in their approach to witnessing.

#### A Genuine Conversion

A genuine conversion means a conversion of heart, mind, and soul, and not merely compliance to proselytizing pressure. It implies that Buddhists repent from their sins and accept Christ as their only Lord and Savior. Those persons experience being born again. This phrase is used in this dissertation against a conversion which derived from unworthy **witness--proselytizing** witness. A conversion resulted from "**unworthiness**" involved in a proselytizing witness may refer to our motives (**concern** for our **glory**, instead of **Christ's**), our methods (trust in psychological pressure or in material inducement, instead of the **Holy Spirit**), or our message (focused on the alleged falsehood and failures of others, instead of on the truth and perfection of Christ) (Stott 1995:54).

## Dialogue

Dialogue is concerned with the serious address and response between two or more persons, in which the being and truth of each is confronted by the being and truth of the other (Howe **1963:4**). Dialogue is used as a vehicle in Christian witness to understand Buddhists' needs and their ideas concerning their faith. Through dialogue, Christians are able to understand Buddhists' cultural and religious values.

## Data and Methodology

Before I could solve the main problem of the dissertation, I needed to gather information from various historical documents **concerning: (1)** how missionaries witness to the Thai, **(2)** how Thai Christians witness, **(3)** how Thai Buddhists respond to Christian witness, and **(4)** how the Thai perception of Christian witness is related to their responsiveness. The information above was found from the diary of Dr. Bradley and the writing of a number of scholars mentioned **earlier** such as Gustafson (1970), Chaiwan (1984), Latourette (1944), Kane (1978), **Neill** (1990), Wells (1958), **Smith** (1980), Blanford (1985), Jeng **(1983)**, and Kim **(1980)** who recorded the ministries of missionaries from **1511-1980**.

Second, I needed to compile the **information** from interviews with 50 Christians who have already confessed their faith in Christ and have been baptized, including a number of foreign missionaries in Thailand, and 50 Buddhists who have heard the presentation of the gospel but still do not believe in Jesus. I focused on four areas from the interviews: **(1)** how **missionaries** witness to the Thai, **(2)** how Thai Christians witness, **(3)** how the Thai respond to

Christian witness, and (4) how the Thai perception of Christian witness is related to their responsiveness.

I have developed a summary of elements characteristic of the meekness approach to witnessing from Dodd (1995), Bavinck (1960), Zahniser (1994), Reg (1980 and **1989**), Komin (1991), biblical sources, **Feltus (1936)**, and **LCWE** (1980). I used these elements to investigate, **interpret**, and explain: (1) the relationship between the demonstration of meekness by missionaries and Thai Christians and the responsiveness of Thai Buddhists to Christian witness, and (2) the relationship between the perception of Thai Buddhists and their responsiveness to Christian witness. The main focus **for** this study was to look at meekness in the Christian witness. I **also** used these characteristic elements to examine data in the diary of Dr. Bradley as well as data from the interviews mentioned above.

I expected to find a dynamic interaction between the demonstration of meekness by missionaries and Thai Christians and the perception of meekness by the Thai which is related to their responsiveness. This interaction was seen in the diary of Dr. Bradley and in the ministries of many missionaries who worked in Thailand from **1511** to 1980. The research documents at present record Christian witness of missionaries up to **1980**. This data was used to evaluate motives and strategy, comparing them with biblical data and cultural values of meekness to analyze the result of Bradley's ministry and that of other missionaries. I determined from interview results which factors in the Christian witness influenced 50 Christians to come to know Christ, and which influenced 50 Buddhists to retain their faith in Buddhism by asking them five open ended questions.

I allowed the data to provide a multi-causal explanation of the responsiveness of the Thai to the gospel. At the same time, I intended to investigate the diary of Dr. Bradley, the ministries of many missionaries, and the interview results through a summary of characteristic elements of meekness to see if meek Christian **witness** in some way played a more significant role in the decisions made.

I **evaluated patterns** of effective and ineffective evangelization derived from the data. This clarified the relationship between the demonstration of meekness of missionaries and Thai Christians and the perception of Thai Buddhists and their responsiveness to **Christian** witness in the two hypotheses. If the perception of Christian witness of Thai Buddhists and Thai Christians and the demonstration of meekness by missionaries and Thai Christians are related to their responsiveness, the history of Christian mission in Thailand and the data from the interviews should show that when missionaries used more aggressive ways, the spread of the gospel was hindered, and when missionaries used more meekness, the fruit began to appear. Ineffective evangelization would reveal some elements of aggression. On the contrary, effective evangelization would show elements of meekness.

Interviews are necessary to this research, because they can provide empirical evidence to validate the thesis that the demonstration of meekness by missionaries and Thai Christians is related to the perception of meekness by the Thai and to their responsiveness to the gospel. The data can be used to encourage missionaries and Thai Christian leaders to find a more effective way. Interviews can also show by real lives how theory is confirmed.

The objectives of the interviews were: **(1)** to determine if the proposed hypotheses of this research are true, and **(2)** to **allow** the receptors of the gospel to share their viewpoints, objectively and subjectively, **concerning** the factors that caused effective **evangelization**. The characteristic elements found in a meekness approach to witnessing are used as descriptions of meekness.

The summary of the **characteristic** elements of meekness are used as a guide to construct a meekness **pattern** that contributes to effective evangelization. The summary of characteristic elements of meekness is carefully designed by understanding the relevance of Thai cultural values from Fieg **(1989)**, **Komin** (1991), and Feltus (1936).

#### Historical Background of Christian Witness in Thailand

The problems of Christian witness in Thailand from **1828** to the present begin with the attitudes of gospel communicators toward Theravada Buddhism, the prominent religion in Thailand, and the lack of understanding of differences between American and Thai cultural value systems.

Cross-cultural communication fails when the identity of the Thai has been violated **(McFarland 1928:14)**. The lack of demonstrated meekness by gospel communicators has been perceived by the Thai as aggression. Consequently, their responsiveness to the presentation of the gospel has been negative, and the message of the gospel has not penetrated the **Buddhists'** minds.

The difficulty in Christian witness in Thailand can be seen from statistics of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. Since the Roman Catholic priests came to Thailand in **1511**, only six churches developed during their first 300 years of mission work. The Roman Catholic Church started growing slowly

again when Protestantism entered Siam in **1828**. It is very interesting to note that the Roman Catholic Church currently has over 200 **organized** congregations, well over half of the total Christian **community--which** is the smallest in Asia in proportion to population (Barrett 1982:664; Busch 1959:125). The Protestant mission encountered the same situation. After preaching **aggressively**, the number of even minimally committed Thai Christians is only about one out of 300 Thais (**Lantern 1986:13**).

**Adoniram** Judson, the first American missionary to **Burma**, spent six long years to win his first convert. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, took seven years to win his first **convert**. The Primitive Methodists in **Northern** Rhodesia (Zambia) labored for **13** years **before** the first African came forward for baptism (Kane 1978:97). In Thailand, it was even worse. The American Congregational missionaries arrived in **1831** and labored for 18 years without baptizing a single convert. They became weary in **well-doing** and withdrew in **1849**. The American Baptists had a similar experience. They baptized a few Chinese converts but not a single Thai. After **17** years of futile effort, they withdrew and did not **return** until after World War II. The American Presbyterians entered in 1840 and refused to leave, but it took them nineteen years to win their first Thai convert! (Kane **1978:97**).

One of the great missionaries to whom the Thai are indebted is Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley. He and his wife spent 38 years of hard work in Siam from **1835** to **1873** and died there. He actively preached the gospel of Jesus Christ nearly every Sunday while in Thailand, but at the end of his ministry he cried out in frustration because he won so few Thais to Christ (**Feltus 1936:166**).

Interview research of 28 **missionaries** confirms that the majority of American missionaries in Thailand have experienced the same thing **Bradley** experienced. They said they felt frustrated, **anxious**, awkward, and insecure in their Christian witness to the Thai.

What can American missionaries and Thai Christians do to solve this problem? How shall they carry on to accomplish and fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as the hopes and dreams of countless dedicated missionaries who worked and died in Thailand?

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate both a past success and a failure of the Christian witness in Thailand. I also intend to show the frustration of both gospel communicators and receptors of the Christian witness. Readers **will** see what happens when there is violation of the **receptors'** identity in the presentation of the gospel. Cultural issues included in this chapter **will** help readers **learn** about five factors related to the problem. They are: **(1)** the cultural background of the Thai, **(2)** the **impact/role** of Buddhism in Thailand, **(3)** what makes a **"Thai" Thai?**, **(4)** the attitude of the Thai toward the West, **(5)** the attitude of the Thai toward Christianity.

### Cultural Background

This section discusses the formation **of Thai** cultural identity. Cultural identity seems to be a prime locus for the construction of truly contextual theologies (Bevans 1992:20).

Thailand was known as Siam through most of its long national existence. Its capital is Bangkok. Situated in the center of mainland Southeast **Asia--** touching Laos, Kampuchea, Malaysia, and **Burma--the** Kingdom of Thailand

has great strategic importance. Mother **Nature**, the monarchy, and Theravada Buddhism are the three basic continuities in the life of the Thai people (**Koyama** 1974:5). As the **region's** only nation to avoid colonial domination, Thailand preserved much of its traditional society and religious traditions. The **modernization** Thailand has experienced since the mid-nineteenth century has not been particularly disturbing because changes were largely sponsored by the royal family rather than being imposed from outside (Cady 1986:585).

Thailand has been a tranquil place to live because her people have never encountered destructive natural forces. The country has no volcanoes, famine, **tomadoes**, snow storms, or heat waves. Earthquakes are very rare and normally cause no damage to property or persons. The temperature is about 25-30 degrees Celsius all year **round**. An old Thai proverb seems ever true; "**We** have fish in the water, and in the paddy fields we have rice." It seems that nature has been good and kind to the people for long years. It may be true that the hearts and minds of the Thai have been shaped by the peace of the nature that surrounds them.

Thailand has 60 million people in a country as big as the state of Texas. The country is inhabited by a people who call themselves Thai. Historically speaking, the Thai belong to a race of very ancient people. Their ancestors were contemporaries of the ancient Egyptians who built the pyramids, and by the time Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt in search of the promised land, the Thai people had founded kingdoms in China (Beek 1983:158). As a race, the Thai are separate from the Chinese. They have different tastes. Although the Thai language is similar to the **Southern** Chinese dialect, the Thai's different preference in literature has resulted in a great deal of Sanskrit

influence in its own language and culture. Whereas the Chinese would rather live on high ground, the Thai prefer rivers and flooded swamps. In spite of thousands of years of close association with the **Chinese**, the Thai never adopted the use of chopsticks for eating. There again, it is a matter of taste (Beek 1983:158).

If anyone were to ask a modern Thai in Thailand the meaning of the word **"Thai,"** the reply would probably be that it means free or freedom and that the name of the country, which is **"Muang Thar** or Thailand, means the land of the free (Beek 1983:159). The Thai people have been engaged in a **struggle** to achieve and maintain their freedom; the word **"Thai"** has become, in their language and in their subconscious minds, synonymous with freedom. To be a Thai is to be free; to lose freedom is to lose **one's** Thai identity. Perhaps it is this unconscious identification of freedom with one's own being that makes the Thai personality most attractive to our friends from abroad. The word **"Thai"** also means **"independent."** When Japanese soldiers invaded Thailand during World War II, the Thai had no freedom to speak of, but they would still remain independent in their own right. Thai is Thai (Beek 1983:159).

The first Thai settlers came from their homeland in **Southern** China as early as the ninth century A.D. By the eleventh century, they had already founded principalities of their own, and by the thirteenth century, those principalities were consolidated into one **nation--a** kingdom independent from China whose capital was established at **Sukhothai**, 300 miles north of Bangkok. The formative work of building the Thai nation and of establishing the Thai national identity was begun and accomplished within the thirteenth century. The national alphabet, founded by King Ram Kamhaeng of Sukhothai during that

time, is still in use today. In a stone inscription by King Ram **Kamhaeng**, all the original liberties which existed, including free trade, were declared. If something should happen to the Thai on their way to freedom from any kind of domination, the king was always there to give aid. In the same inscription, it is mentioned that at the palace gate there hung a bell; any citizen who had "pains in his stomach or grievance in his **heart**" could ring the bell, and the king would appear in person to give redress. Thus, a Thai king in the thirteenth century began a system which is now known as **twenty-four** hour service.

After migrating to their present country, the Thai found many other people already living there. The **Khmers**, ancestors of the modern Cambodians, were ruling from Angkor **Thom**, an empire which included the **western** part of Thailand (**Wyatt 1984:25**). The **Mons** were rulers of kingdoms in the central plains, while the South was a part of an ancient empire with a glittering culture known as **Srivijaya** and *Dvaravati* (**Wyatt 1984:21**). After the first contact, the Thai began to deal with the people they found in their newly adopted land in their own peculiar way. They came as meek people who did not want to fight but rather asked permission to live with them peacefully. Then they absorbed or assimilated both **Mon** and Khmers to be Thais.

The Thai encountered them peacefully and turned them into Thais. Thai assimilation was remarkable in its complete lack of imposition; and there appear to have been no bad feelings among those assimilated (**Beek 1983:161**). In their task of assimilating other peoples the Thai adopted the best in other cultures, one characteristic of Thai meekness. They adopt other things in their taste, at the same time keeping prominent the Thai identity and Thai language.

When colonialism and Protestantism came in 1828 and Communism in 1973, Thai **kings**, Thai **government**, and Thai people used absorption and a meek approach to win them all. There have never been any religious wars, political wars, civil wars, or even wars among ethnic groups in the country. Aggression of any kind was solved by meekness.

Communism invaded most of the countries in Southeast Asia. The United States came to solve the problem by using Thailand as an air base to bomb Communists in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. **M.R. Kukrit Pramoj**, the Prime Minister at that time, solved the problem the Thai way. He flew to meet Mao Tse Tung, Chairman of the Communist Party of China. Pramoj wrote in his journal:

He went on and talked about this and that. He told me how to deal with the Thai **Communists**. First of all, don't issue any propaganda against them to tell the people they are bad, they are wrong and all that sort of thing. Secondly, do not kill them all because they like being heroes. Killing them off would be equal to calling more people to be killed. Thirdly, do not send any soldiers against them because you will be wasting time and a lot of money. Finally, he said the only thing to get rid of your Communists, the only way to defeat them is to see that your people are happy. See that they are well fed, that they have work to do, and are satisfied with their **work** and their station. Then the Communists cannot do anything. That is very good advice, I thought. (Beek 1983:153-154)

Pramoj returned to Thailand and put these suggestions into practice. The Thai **government** treated the Communists by issuing new laws to deal with them more gently. The Thai Communist Party eventually lost their power and almost disappeared from Thailand. When Pramoj chose the Thai way of meekness, the **government** was **able** to convert Communists to be good Thai citizens. Fighting with the Communists ended.

**Freedom**, Thai assimilation, and Thai absorption are three important characteristics of the Thai. When faced with new ideas from the outside, a similar **response** can be seen. Buddhism, because of its **congruity** with the Thai **pattern** of interaction, contributed greatly to the identity of the Thai and the Thai way of meekness.

#### The Impact/Role of Buddhism in Thailand

Buddhism literally means the teachings of Buddha derived from his enlightenment (Segaller 1989:209). In the sixth century B.C., two great movements of religious revolt occurred that were directed particularly against the last aspects of the orthodox Hinduism of the time. Religious reformers who led them were Mahavira, the great teacher of the Jain **sect**, and his far better known younger contemporary, the Buddha, who lived probably from 563 to 483 B.C.

Neither Mahavira nor the Buddha offered an **alternative** god to worship. Nor did they challenge the gods of Hinduism. The Buddha's teachings rang out as a clear call to strenuous moral effort in this life (this worldly), as opposed to preoccupation with useless speculation about gods and otherworldly paths to salvation (Lamb 1966:23).

Today, many of the teachings of these two minority religions have been absorbed within the majority religion, Hinduism. Thus they have had a profound effect on Indian as well as Thai attitudes (Lamb 1966:24). The Indian ideal of non-violence and non-aggression received special impetus from the teaching of Mahavira and Buddha (Lamb 1966:24). Vegetarianism, which is practiced by some but not all Hindu castes, also probably stems from these

sources. The original idea of vegetarianism was not to kill and violate animals' lives. It demonstrated **non-violence** in the minds of Buddhist and Hindu peoples. For this reason, the Thai **learned** to avoid aggression rather than to defend themselves against it (Cooper and Cooper 1982:86). This non-aggression and **non-violence** attitude of the Thai has influenced our culture, and today can help missionaries and Thai Christians a great deal to develop intimate dialogue with the Thai for **cross-cultural** communication and Christian witness.

Aggression against **life**, taking of life, and **disturbing of life** in any form has always been especially abhorrent to **Mahavira's** followers, the Jains (Lamb 1966:24). **Theravada** Buddhist monks must walk slowly and watch their footsteps carefully lest they tread on any form of life. Tearing any leaves from trees is prohibited and seen as aggression against **life**. A filter must be used by monks to screen small living things from water before drinking.

The feature of the Buddha's teachings most generally known in the West is that he stressed the sorrowful and transient nature of life and considered the goal of humans to be the progressive detachment from desire and finally the extinction of the **self--nirvana** (literally, a blowing out). This is only one part of his message which focused above all on personal everyday morality, self-control, integrity, and love (Lamb 1966:24). These preoccupations were quite different from the stress on ritual in early Hinduism.

A few quotations from the early collection of Buddhist sayings, the **Dhammapadam** will illustrate the quality of the Buddha's thought:

Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth. . . .

The fault of the others is easily perceived but that of one's self is difficult to perceive; a man winnows his **neighbor's** faults like chaff, but his own fault he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the player. . . .

Rouse thyself by thyself, examine thyself by thyself. Thus self protected and attentive will thou live happily. . . . For self is the Lord of self, self is the refuge of self; therefore curb thyself as the merchant curbs a noble horse. (**Muller 1942:353**)

Over the course of time, Buddhism changed greatly. Mahayana Buddhism no longer stressed the quality of Buddha as a unique and outstanding human being. But Theravada Buddhism kept urging people not to look to the gods but rather to be self-reliant.

Meanwhile, Hinduism took over much of the Buddha's moral message and recognized him as one of the many gods of the Hindu pantheon. Thus the original sharp contrast between Hinduism and Buddhism became blurred. Hinduism used absorption to eliminate Buddhism from India. Buddhism sacrificed its form in order to leave its essence of high ethical teachings in Hinduism. Buddhists are interested in moral teachings and practices, **non-violence**, **this-worldly** concepts, not gods or other-worldly concepts. They use non-aggression, and **self-reliance** in achieving their **ideals--nirvana**. Buddhism contributed these characteristics to the Thai.

The characteristics of the Thai generated by Buddhism helps missionaries and Thai Christians to follow Dodd's (**1995**) suggestion in building up relationships with them and **Zahniser's (1994)** idea in using intimate dialogue.

#### What Makes a Thai Thai?

M.R. Kukrit **Pramoj**, a Thai scholar, philosopher, and former prime minister of Thailand, defined in a clear way what makes a Thai "**Thai**." He said

that a Thai is not a Thai only by blood. Ethnic background does not come into it at all (Beek 1983:203). This fact surprises many **Westerners**. Former mentor, the late Dr. Everett **Hunt**, Jr., was greatly surprised. He said this was the first time he realized this fact. He asked me whether he could be a Thai. This section will answer his question. His question was, "**Can** an American be a **Thai?**"

A Thai can be black, white, or yellow and from a different ancestry- Indian, Chinese, **Farang**(foreigners), **anything--but** all are accepted. There are no half-castes in Thailand. Thainess is very strong. It serves as an adjective to put in front of all ethnic groups in Thailand, but it is soft enough to dissolve differences in all ethnic groups and make them become one. We **call** Muslims in Thailand, "**Thai-Muslims,**" and hill tribe peoples who hold animism as "**ChaoThai-Phukao**" which means "**Thai-hill tribes.**" Shigeharu Tanabe, a Japanese scholar who wrote Religious Traditions Among Tai Ethnic Groups: A Selected Bibliography (1991), mentioned numerous ethnic groups in Thailand; their total population is still a minority of less than six percent of the population. Each group Tanabe mentioned must have the word Thai put in front of it, e.g. **Tai Yai, Tai-Noi, Tai Dam, Tai-Dang** (Tanabe 1991:253-246).

A Thai person may have an English father and a Thai mother, but one makes oneself a Thai by accepting Thai values and Thai ideals. A Thai must be able to speak Thai well. It should be noted at this point that many American missionaries who try to be Thais by dressing like Thais, eating (like Thais, and even living like **Thais** cannot be Thais. To be Thais they must accept Thai values and Thai ideals (Beek 1983:203).

To push the discussion **to** an extreme, **Pramoj** said that a Thai will also say you must become a Buddhist (**Beek 1983:203**). In this case, you must respect the Lord Buddha, his teaching, and the holy order of monks. You should respect your parents and your teachers, worship the king, or rather be loyal to the king and to the Thai nation. You accept all kinds of ceremonies, wear amulets around your **neck**, figures of Lord Buddha, get ordained as a Buddhist monk, and practice Thai ceremonies at home for weddings and anniversaries. You enjoy life the Thai way and have the same sort of Thai escape mechanisms when troubles arise (**Beek 1983:203**). The Thai must speak the Thai language well. This is **Pramoj's** personal idea. If the context requires such, readers can see that Christians can do all things **Pramoj** mentioned except wearing **amulets--figures** of Buddha around our necks, or become ordained as Buddhist monks. But Buddha himself does not require these things. In fact, these factors that Christians cannot perform are not criteria to evaluate Thainess at all. **Komin (1991:132-218)** suggested many unique elements of Thainess which will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Thais recognize each other. They know whether or not another person is a Thai regardless of skin color or religious belief. Christianity and **Islam** have been established in this country for centuries, and the people of these religions, including the Taoists from China, became Thai because they accepted all kinds of Thai values, ideas, and customs, even though their religious beliefs remained as in the beginning. Expression of their thought in the writing and conversation of the Thai is not similar to any other nation. When the Thai try to express something, they have their own way of doing it. They can identify this expression in another person and will regard him or her as a Thai accordingly.

The same Thainess must be saturated with respect and loyalty to the king. The feeling is that whatever we do, the achievement must be graced by His Majesty the King, or by the monarchy.

Why are Buddhists in Thailand reluctant to accept Christ? They are afraid of losing the Thainess the Thai culture contributes to their identity. On the contrary, they should know that the Thai can become Thais as Christians. The more Christianity can demonstrate **explicitly** that the change is inward and personal, not social or national, the more Thai people will be open to becoming Christians. If one asks, "**Can I be a Thai?**" The answer is, "**Yes,** to some **degree,**" if one accepts Thai values, ideals, and Thai escape mechanisms as mentioned **earlier**. To be a Thai, one is not qualified by color, blood, or race, but by a certain way of life and by one's own respect toward certain institutions (Beek 1983:162).

Dr. **Darrell Whiteman**, professor in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, at **Asbury** Theological Seminary, **Wilmore**, Kentucky, heard over and over again in Thailand, "**To be Thai is to be a Buddhist**" (Whiteman 1997:2). The notion that one could be both Thai and Christian was an oxymoron to many (Whiteman 1997:2).

It should be noted that Thais' escape mechanisms are remarkable. Incidents in this chapter will prepare readers to see what makes a Thai "**Thai**." In Chapter 2, "**Thainess**" will be explained further. In Chapter 3, readers will begin to understand the significance of the **Thais'** perceptions of and responsiveness to the Christian witness.

### The Attitude of the Thai toward the West

Western culture and Christianity came to Thailand together. The cross followed the flag. It was difficult from a Thai's perspective to differentiate between them. Thai people always think **Christianity** is the religion of **Western** countries. The following incidents would demonstrate why the **Westerners** and Christianity created positive and negative attitudes in the minds of the Thai.

**Western** countries demonstrated an *Oud Sakda* ("manifest destiny") to the Thai beginning with the King Rama III. The Thai people did not like this mentality. This forced the Thai to assimilate **Western** standards to please the colonists. This is what is referred to as the **Thai** escape mechanism in response to **Western** countries. The Thai people understood that missionaries came to change the religion of the Thai from Buddhism to Christianity. This was very serious and the Thai were not happy about it, but they could not do anything else.

At the same **time**, Christianity brought education, medical sciences, physical sciences, and technology. Missionaries **were** kind in many ways. They helped people and the royal families in national crises. At the same time, they preached the gospel to the Thai. The Thai admired technology and wanted very much to **learn** from the missionaries, but they responded negatively to the gospel in a quiet way in their hearts.

**Western** European colonialism was beginning to threaten Asia, and the king realized this. One incident after another proved him right. The British took Burma during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) . The French took Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the reign of King Rama V (1869-1910)

and forced Thailand to give up those states. Cambodia and Laos had been under Thailand called **PrathetSarat**. They had their own kings, monarchy and **governments** but had to pay tribute to Thailand in recognition of Thai sovereignty.

Many Malay states were also under Thailand at the time. In King Rama **III's time**, the British acknowledged the suzerainty of the king of Thailand as far down as Perak and over to the Malaysian states. They also recognized Thai sovereignty over Cambodia and Laos. The reason the Thai Kingdom remained afloat is that Rama **I**, the founder of the present dynasties, was an imperialist himself. He added many territories to Thailand which were not really Thai. Cambodians, Malays, Laos, and even Vietnamese were regarded as under Thai sovereignty this way.

When his grandson, King Mongkut, and his great-grandson, **Chulalongkorn**, came to the throne in 1851 and 1868 respectively, they had large tracts of land to give away to the colonial powers which they did not regard as part of true Thailand. They gave away territories and pacified the colonists.

At the same time, they realized the Victorian colonialists had certain customs and also moral standards the countries under their control were expected to **adopt**. For the sake of survival, Thailand appeared to assimilate these standards to please the colonists. King Mongkut built **Western** buildings. He made all kinds of "**window dressing**" changes to satisfy the **Western** colonists. He adopted **Western** dress, spoke English as a fashion, wrote in English, made friends with English diplomats and so on. Sir John Browning, who sincerely liked King Mongkut, regarded him as very advanced for his time.

When King **Chulalongkom** ascended the throne, he went to **all** the colonial **states**, such as India and Indonesia, bringing back architecture and city planning styles from Jakarta. One can see that influence, and department offices all over the country still reflect the Dutch colonial architecture. This is a facade, however, behind which lies something different. Against Victorian morality, polygamy was still **practiced**, but nobles and princes, when they entertained Europeans, only introduced one wife. The manifest destiny of colonial countries had been perceived by the Thai as aggression. From colonial days to the present the Thai **call** all **farangs(Westerners)** who have left unfavorable impressions on the Thai by the name *mun* (it).

This means that the Thai remain closed communities where foreigners are not allowed, and even if they are permitted to enter, an invisible wall awaits them there, a dividing line foreigners never really cross (Beek 1983:205). In Thai, the third person singular or plural used for *farangs (Westerners)* or other nationalities is *mun*, "it." Rather than "he" or "she", "his" or "her" or "they", it is "it" the whole time. When Thais want to refer to **Westerners** in the third person, we called them "it" (Beek 1983:205).

Missionaries should always recognize the fact that they are outsiders in the perception of the Thai. Can **Westerners** ever overcome this handicap? Yes, they can, if they develop a genuine, long term, sincere relationship with Buddhists with no **strings** attached and develop Thai values and **ideals** into their lives. **Incarnational** ministries will help **Western** missionaries and Thai Christians overcome alienation from Thai communities.

These incidents confirm that the Thai always solved political problems and conflicts by developing relationships with **Westerners**. They tried to please

Westerners for their own survival. This helps missionaries and Thai Christians to develop intimate dialogue with them as Zahniser (1994) suggested, and **bring** Christ to them in later times.

This mentality of the Thai provides a channel for missionaries and Thai Christians to develop a smooth relationship and to become **insiders**. Those missionaries and Thai Christians who develop the role of vulnerability and allow the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts are the ones to be used by the **Holy** Spirit to draw Buddhists to Christ (Zahniser **1994**; Bavinck **1960**).

#### The Attitudes of the Thai toward Christianity

**Carl E. Blanford**, an American missionary to Thailand in 1951 observed and commented about Christianity in Thailand as follows:

Christianity has been introduced into Thailand by **Westerners** and is generally regarded as a **"foreign religion."** Its institutions are foreign. The architecture of **its** buildings is foreign. **Its** music is foreign. Its emphasis on individual conversion and the separation of its members from their original social relationships also cause people to regard it as foreign. This foreignness of Christianity as introduced and practiced in Thailand constitutes a difficult barrier for the present-day missionary to overcome. (Blanford **1985:84**)

**Blanford's** observation and comment show that missionaries and Thai Christians have not been aware of contextualization of Christianity to the Thai for a long period of time.

History gives us a glimpse of the relationship between the demonstration of meekness of missionaries and the perception of the Thai and their responsiveness. Thai attitudes toward Christianity have fluctuated from negative to neutral, and from neutral to positive, depending on the missionaries' actions. Their response depends on the demonstration of missionaries toward Buddhism and the king-the core of their identity.

Traditional Thai values have been hospitality, gentleness, religious devotion, hard work when necessary, a pleasant, easy-going life with enough to eat and a place to **live**, contentment with what one has, a good family life, honesty, compassion and esteem **for** the king (**Laschenski 1984:77**). Cultural conflicts started when Christianity came to Thailand with colonialism. In the beginning, it was difficult for the Thai to differentiate between the colonialists and missionaries. Colonialism came with political powers. British and French, people who held Christianity as their religion, took parts of our country. They **eventually** saw that missionaries acted differently because, at the same time, missionaries sacrificed their lives and helped the Thai in times of disease and crisis. As time passed the goodness of missionaries helped the Thai differentiate between the two groups. They concluded that the goodness of Christ could not be seen in colonialism but in missionaries. The church should be separated from politics as much as possible.

During the reign of King Narai (**1656-1688**), many Roman Catholic priests came to Siam with Portuguese soldiers. The problem started when a Catholic priest became involved himself in politics in Siam. During the reign of King Rama III (**1828-1851**), Rev. Dan Beach Bradley came to Siam during the time England tried to colonize Siam.

Christians have created many good and bad impressions in Thailand. I will cite a few examples. First, the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley shown by his medical service, demonstrated a godly lifestyle and presented Christianity as a help and benefit to the Thai. He was successful in this, but when he preached the gospel to the Thai he failed. The reason behind this was that the **internal** organs of the Thai responded to **Western** medicines

immediately, but the **internal worldview** of the Thai **turned** against spiritual medicines. The Thai saw the power of the medicines right away. They got their benefits immediately. Bradley was one of the most important medical missionaries to Siam and served his Lord and the Siamese for 38 years before he died in Siam in **1873**. He was the first man to introduce **Western** medical and surgical systems and public dispensaries in **1835**. Bradley was also the first doctor to use inoculation and vaccination in **1838** and the first to introduce **Western** modes of obstetrics in 1839, a private hospital in **1843**, and a homeopathic medical system in 1851 (Feltus 1936:7; Bradley 1981:57).

This American missionary also was proficient in the printing business and introduced the printing press and book binding in **1835**, type casting in 1841, lithography in **1859**, and commercial printing in 1857 (Feltus 1936:7). The countless stories of how he lived, helped, and healed through his ministry make his lifestyle very impressive. Thailand and the Thai are indebted to Bradley. The Thai appreciate the kindness demonstrated through his works, technology, sciences, lifestyles and his presentation of Christianity in the form of practical assistance and benefits.

Donald **C.** Lord, an American scholar who was Associate Professor of history at Texas Woman's University, wrote Mo Bradley and Thailand (1969). In his book, he quotes a comment of a Thai noble on Bradley's character. He stated, "**There** must be something in your religion different from ours to create such a man, one who never showed anger no matter how badly he was abused by the **Thai**" (Lord 1969:207).

At the end of his ministry, Bradley had led only a few Thais to Christ, but his mercy, love, and goodness from the Lord was evident to all the Thai. His

lifestyle positively worked toward the meek approach although his preaching ministry did not.

A second example is **Dr.** and Mrs. Samuel **R.** House, a medical doctor and his wife with the **American** United Presbyterian mission, who started the first boarding school in **1875**. As soon as the ladies of the American mission become friendly with the people, several little girls gained entrance into their homes and thus formed the nucleus of a girls' school. Some of these children **learned** to read, write, and speak a little English and became quite famous among their own people. This school is still operated in Bangkok under the name of Wattana **Wittaya** Academy, presently one of the best Christian schools in Thailand. A number of students became Christians by observing the lifestyles of those early missionaries and accepting the gospel. The sacrificial lives and ministry of the Houses also worked positively toward the meek approach.

Readers can **learn** a third example from the Christian preaching of Bradley, who preached the words of God to the Thai more than anyone else in his time. Although not culturally attuned, he gave the best to the **Thai--the** words of God. Almost every Sunday he went out to preach. He recorded in his diary:

Sunday. February 24. 1872. . . I went out in the **morning** over the river within the wall of the **king's** palace and preached first to a company of carpenters and joiners, who were engaged in building a new **soldier's** barrack, and second to a company of Siamese on the porch of Wat **Pra** Kao. . . .

Sunday. April 14. 1872. . . Preached to large company of Siamese men near one of the gates of the Royal Harem who had come from the country to work a month for the **government**. They were seated by the way side waiting for the gate to open for them to enter. From there, talked 12-15 minutes as **earnestly** and as

directly as **I could**, proceeded to temple Pra Kao and seated myself on a step leading up to one of its pearl doors. **I** soon gathered an audience of **40-50** who heard precious Bible truths from my lips. . . .

Sunday. June 2. 1872 . . .**Preached** in the court of the Royal Palace. Spoke **15** minutes in the Royal Court House itself to members of Siamese and gave them a few small tracts. Spoke to a company in the new reception house now in the process of finishing. In **afternoon**, spoke to a company at the landing of the temple Mooleeloke. At 4:00 **PM** attended church at the Protestant Chapel. (Feltus 1936: 301)

Bradley's Christian witness was done through natural encounters. This is illustrated as follows:

**I** went to the "**S.S. Bangkok**" and met there the Regent, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of War and many other officials deeply engaged in buying shoes for themselves, their wives and their children. His Grace, the Regent, asked me if **I** thought well of the changes they were making in costume and so on. **I** replied yes, but **I** added that they should not be contented with this improvement but should go on and overthrow idolatry. This led to an animated discussion between us in which all were much interested. His Grace clearly expressed his infidel sentiments that one religion is as good as another and that religion is a mere custom, not taught or required by any God. He stated plainly that he **didn't** believe in **Buddhism**, he did not worship idols and that such worship was foolishness. (Feltus 1936: 302)

According to Dodd, Bradley did not consider Thai culture nor **bring** interpersonal relationship into consideration in his Christian witness (1995:6). Bradley did not create precontact impressions long enough before he communicated the gospel (Dodd 1995:21).

If readers use **Zahniser's** method to evaluate this incident, Bradley did not develop intimate dialogue and the role of vulnerability in order to become convincing with the Thai (1994:72).

If judged by Bavinck, **I** do not see any clear evidences from his dairy that Bradley set himself to be nor was he convicted by the Holy Spirit to understand

the Thai. This may be one of many reasons that Bradley could not draw Buddhists to Christ (Bavinck 1960:272).

Bradley did not develop a genuine, long-term relationship with the **Thai**. Often he preached at the wrong place at the wrong time. He did not select receptive groups. Bradley did not know how much the Buddhists understood of his preaching of the gospel. **Bradley's** preaching worked **negatively** against the meek approach. Meekness was not demonstrated in Bradley's Christian witness for he could not draw the Thai to Christ in his presentation of the gospel. Dr. Bradley faithfully preached and witnessed for 38 years in Siam. After his preaching or witnessing, he would **return** home and cry out to God:

December 10. 1853 . . . But Oh! my leanness, my leanness in the missionary work. I am almost horrified with the thought of it. When shall I become a fruitful missionary? When shall I win some poor heathen to Christ? Oh! that I might have some joy. (Feltus 1936:166)

March 29. 1868 . . . I come to the Communion Service with a feeling of great sadness for the desolation that has taken place among our native members. We had only six native members, five young men and one young woman. Four of the young men [who] have been suspended for many months from Communion this day give any evidence of at all being penitent for their sins. (Feltus 1936:270)

February 1. 1868 . . . I was severely tempted with this discouragement in view of the desolation of my little church and the apparent barrenness of my missionary life. Sampan, **Sawat**, Boon and Ooan had their own reasons to withhold their faith. (Feltus 1936:268)

September 6. 1868 . . . On my **return** from preaching, I felt too weary to kneel in prayer. I cast myself on my couch and groaned out my petitions to the Lord, but it was nearly time to start with my family to attend the Union Services in the Protestant Church, a three **mile** distance, hence I aroused myself to it. (Feltus 1936:278)

Several incidents that follow reveal impressions made by missionaries other than Bradley in Siam. These show that missionaries, in their Christian

witness, used both good and bad methods. These parallel the struggle Bradley encountered all of his life.

First, Roman Catholic priests came with the power of the Portuguese during the reign of King Narai (1656-1688). They were welcomed in Thailand, but the Roman Catholic priests had a hidden plan in their minds to convert the king. They did many good things in Siam. The Thai admired the priests and their religion, but when they discovered their hidden plan to convert the king, the good things they did were perceived as less valuable in Thais' minds. Their appreciation decreased. The king was not converted, and the people rejected Christianity too. They learned from the beginning that Christianity and the priests always carried a hidden agenda in their land. All Christians desire non-believers to become Christians and Thai Buddhists do not object to Christians sharing their faith. However, when the agenda of missionaries is perceived as hidden, then the Thai object, for they feel manipulated. Although the priest had no intention of being aggressive, nevertheless when his hidden agenda came to light, it was judged aggressive by the Thai because of their value of meekness. For this reason, meekness was not demonstrated by the Christian witness of Catholic priests because the priests could not lead King Narai and the Thai closer to Christ. It is true that the priests created precontact impression formation (Dodd 1995), but seemed to neglect intimate dialogue (Zahniser 1994). If the priests drew themselves closer to Christ and allowed the Holy Spirit to convict them as suggested by Bavinck (1960), they would have grasped the Thai cultural and religious value system better and would have avoided this tragedy. Christian witness which derived from the hidden agendas of the Catholic priests was interpreted by the Thai as negative in contrast to the

meek approach (Thompson 1967:171-173).

Second, Protestantism came with European and American missionaries. European powers **arrived** and they forced the Thai **government** by the use of politics as a means to trade. They brought with them soldiers and warships and weapons along with **political** powers. They tried to subjugate Siam in political ways through colonialism which the Thai disliked. The Thai **government** closed the country to all **Western** powers in later years. The United States was the only country that showed kindness to the Thai, and showed that they did not want to control Siam politically. Missionaries served the king and tried to help Siam avoid being colonized, but at the time, Thai people could not differentiate the identities or intentions of the **Westerners**. The Thai were confused. In their **minds, Western** missionaries, **Western** people, and their activities were of the same lot. King Rama III's last words on his death bed were:

Beware of **farangs(Westerners)**. They will become your big problems in the future. Adopt all their good qualities if you can, but do not worship them or regard them as something better than yourselves. (Beek 1983:209)

The Thai have respected his **warning** ever since for they see that the European powers worked **negatively** against the meek approach. Because Protestantism and European powers came to Siam without realizing the cultural and religious values of the Thai, their Christian witness and demonstration of power were judged aggressive by the Thai.

Third, British missionary Anna Leonowens and American Christian writer Mrs. Margaret Landon produced a book entitled Anna and the King of Siam (1944). The book portrayed King Mongkut as a frivolous tyrant **tuned** into a benevolent monarch through the ministrations of his children's **governess**, Anna

**Leonowens**, a somewhat misguided, puritanical lady with a lively imagination but a poor grasp of Thai culture (**Basche 1971:6**).

Despite all Thai efforts to change it, King **Mongkut's** image overseas remains that of Anna's (and Mrs. Landon's) portrayal rather than that of one of the greatest, gentlest, most intelligent and far-sighted kings in Thai **history**. The **movie** "The King and I," which fixed that image in the **Western** consciousness, was banned from Thailand in **1955** and has not been shown **since**. Even today, mere mention of it to those Thais who have seen it can rankle even the most **unruffable**.

On November **14, 1953**, Mr. Kenneth P. Landon proudly admitted his own complicity in the crime against King Mongkut (Beek **1983:78**). Landon came to Thailand and explained the reason why he and his wife wrote the **book**. They mentioned that they wanted the whole world to recognize the King of Siam. As the husband of the writer, he did aid and abet her in her work, which the king himself characterized as showing the "**barbarous** superstitions of those untamed Americans" (Beek **1983:78**).

M.R. Pramoj, a former Prime Minister of Thailand said:

**All** this is indeed alarming news. Generally speaking, kings in the hands of Americans are like mice in a cat's paws, but Thai kings in the hands of frustrated American missionaries are perhaps destined for a worse fate. The best we can do now is to shut our eyes tightly and pray, "**God** save our ancient **Kings**." (Beek **1983:79**)

The witnessing of Mr. and Mrs. Landon, American Presbyterian missionaries to Siam, worked negatively against the meek approach. Mrs. Landon created uncertainty in cross-cultural communication to the Thai **government**. She did not know that what she wrote affected relationships

(Dodd **1995:28-29**). Mrs. Landon did not bring herself close enough to grasp the Thai cultural value system. She did not realize the result would come out like this. With intimate dialogue, as suggested by **Zahniser (1994)**, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as recommended by Bavinck (**1960**), she would have written the story in another way, one which uplifted Thai monarchy and identity. This would have led the Thai closer to missionaries and Christ.

Fourth, a Mormon missionary behaved in an impolite manner which the Thai considered aggressive. He and others were disrespectful in sitting on the shoulder of a huge Buddha image in Thailand in **1970**. They took a photograph which unfortunately was published in a daily newspaper. This missionary was captured and his visa terminated. He was sent back home. Again, this was due to a different viewpoint on a cultural matter. The witnessing of this Mormon missionary worked negatively against the meek approach. This incident violated Dodd's, **Bavinck's** and **Zahniser's** suggestions completely. The incident was judged aggressive by the Thai because of the Thai value of meekness.

Fifth, a devout Korean missionary, Rev. Kim Young Bae, applied his own customs from home to Thailand. He demonstrated what he thought a Buddhist who wanted to become a Christian **should** do in order to show true departure **from** Buddhism. He smashed a number of Buddha images with a hammer in front of a number of visiting Korean missionaries in the backyard of a rural church in Srisagate, a province in Northeast Thailand. These Buddha images belonged to a new convert in his church. Even after receiving **warning** from Thai Christians, he rushed to perform his duty proudly. This happened in **1994**. Many newspapers in Thailand published this incident. The whole community

excommunicated him from the area, and the police tried to find him. The Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand urged him to fly back to Korea within 24 hours. He did, and his wife and children followed. He could not **return** to Thailand to serve the Lord anymore. The witnessing of the Korean missionary worked negatively against the meek approach. Meekness was not demonstrated by Kim's Christian witness for he pushed the Thai far away from Christian communities and from Christ.

Rev. Kim did not know Thai cultural values because he was so sure that he was able to use his own culture in Korea with the Thai in **Thailand**. He disregarded the suggestion of Thai leaders who **warned** him in advance. If he had relied on the Holy Spirit and developed intimate dialogue with Buddhist communities, he would have discovered by himself that his action related directly to the relationship with the Thai.

These incidents represent actions performed by missionaries which were published in books and daily newspapers. Thus, some missionaries have been considered by Buddhists to be great people who are kind and merciful, and some are seen as aggressive people who do not understand Buddhism and Thai culture. There are now approximately one thousand missionaries in Thailand. These incidents show that some missionaries perceive things differently from the Thai, and if they want to win the Thai to Christ, they must adjust their attitudes and change their motives toward Buddhism and the Thai culture. These incidents demonstrate:

When Christianity is not contextualized or is contextualized poorly, then people are culturally offended, **turned** off to inquiring more about **who** Jesus is, or view missionaries and their small band of converts with suspicion as cultural misfits and aliens. When people are offended for the wrong reason, the garments of

Christianity gets stamped with the label **"Made in America and Proud of It,"** and so it is easily dismissed as a **"foreign religion"** and hence irrelevant to their culture. (Whiteman 1997:4)

A good number of missionaries in Thailand did not follow the same behavior as these misguided missionaries. The Thai people are indebted and grateful to them. History records their sacrificial deeds for the Thai, and this cannot be erased. The king and the people have developed good relationships with them over a long period of time. Could it be that these missionaries would win hundreds of Thai converts if they would use less aggression, more gentleness, and would not violate the identity of the Thai in their proclamation of the gospel?

Some missionaries sincerely think Buddhism is evil and find nothing good in its teaching. They think Buddhism should be discarded altogether and all idols cast away. Could it be possible that these missionaries could win thousands of Thai converts if they created precontact impression formation as suggested by Dodd (1995), allowed the Holy Spirit to convict themselves first before the **Holy** Spirit used them to draw Buddhists to Christ as Bavinck recommended (1960), developed intimate dialogue and used **"close encounters of the vulnerable kind"** as suggested by Zahniser (1994)?

Thai people usually perceive that good religions have many essential points in common, and it is impossible to venerate one's own without respecting faiths which teach similar doctrines. The Thai were impressed by the manners of missionaries and their absence of anger when arguing their points in religious matters with the Thai. They noted more their moral standards and their practice of **Dharma** rather than the doctrines of **Christianity** or what was said about their religion, at least in the first stage of interaction. If missionaries do not

change their approach the Thai people will not convert. They have accepted gratefully the 286 educational institutions and 27 hospitals built by the missionaries as **well** as the major role the Christians play in caring for the refugees, but they haven't accepted their religion (**Lantern 1986:13**).

### Summary

In this chapter the problem of Christian witness and its background in Thailand have been introduced as **well** as the theoretical framework for solving the problem of Christian witness in Thailand

The first part of the chapter sheds light on the promises and the problems of Christian witness in Thailand introducing the concept of the violation of Thai identity, and Thai cultural and religious values. It provides a background of Thai culture and history. It documents the Thai meek response to various aggressive demonstrations performed by the Roman Catholic priests, colonialists, Communists, and Protestants in the past. It also outlines some of the issues of high and popular Buddhism and defines what makes a Thai **"Thai."**

The last two sections deal with the attitudes of the Thai toward the West and Christianity. The attitudes of the Thai were positive to those missionaries who demonstrated meekness and helped the Thai, and were negative to those who demonstrated their lack of understanding of Buddhism and the Thai culture. **Western** culture and Christianity contributed some great things as well as some very sad things to Thailand. Thai views toward Americans make missionaries aware of how to identify problems in the Christian witness in Thailand. Could it be that if missionaries would study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously and adjust their strategies to fit the Thai character, they

would have results?

According to the **historical** incidents above, it seems to me that the Christian witness of missionaries in Siam work positively toward the meek approach when: (1) they present Christianity in terms of help and benefits, (2) they develop their relationships with the Thai, (3) they develop a genuine, and long-term relationship with no strings attached or hidden agendas, or (4) they separate Christian missions from colonialism and politics.

On the contrary, the Christian witness of missionaries in Siam works negatively against the meek approach when: (1) they preach the gospel to Buddhists for fifteen minutes without developing any relationships with them by intimate dialogue, (2) they preach to the Thai at wrong places and at wrong times, and with wrong persons, (3) **Westerners demonstrate "Oud Sakda"** (manifest destiny) to the Thai, (4) they smash Buddha images or sit on the Buddha **image's** shoulders, or look down on Buddhism, (5) they misuse the king and his name; they do not create precontact impression formation, (7) they do not discover that the content they preach or write affects relationships, and (8) they do not bring the Thai closer to themselves and Christ because they do not allow the Holy Spirit to convict them first.

Chapter 2 provides deeper reasons for why the Thai think and act as they do as cited in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 illustrates the differences between Thai and American cultural and religious value systems.

## CHAPTER 2

### Between Two Worlds

This chapter is concerned with understanding Thai value systems and behavioral **patterns**, understanding the differences between the cultural concepts of the Thai and **Americans**, and understanding the differences between the religious concepts of the Thai and Americans. This chapter helps American missionaries and Thai Christians understand more fully the psychology of the Thai. This knowledge in **turn will** help missionaries and Thai Christians adjust and design their meekness in Christian witness to Thai Buddhists. This chapter lays a foundation for understanding differences between American and Thai cultural and religious values and also provides criteria for evaluation of Christian witness discussed in Chapter 3.

The first part of this chapter relies on the ten years of research and empirical data of Dr. Suntaree **Komin** (1991), a Thai Fulbright scholar. Her book, The Psychology of the Thai People : Values and Behavioral **Patterns** (1991), serves as the main source to help us understand Thai cultural values and the application and practice of these values in Theravada Buddhism in Thailand. Komin provides nine value clusters which are elements in the structure of the Thai identity. They are important to Christian witness because they help missionaries and Thai Christians recognize and practice meek behavior and mannerisms which will be discussed in Chapter 3. Insights from **Komin's** and other related work will be used as a tool to measure cultural and religious sensitivity when examining the data on evangelism later.

The second part of this chapter relies on three sources: A Common Core: Thais and **Americans** (1989), Interact: Guidelines for Thais and North Americans (1980), and Working with the Thais (1995). The first two sources were written by John Paul Fieg, an American scholar who lived in Thailand for many years. The third one was written by Dr. Henry Holmes, a Harvard scholar in anthropology, and Suchada **Tangtongtavy**, a Thai sociologist. With **Komin's** text, these four sources will **help** missionaries and Thai Christians understand the cultural perception of Thai Buddhists toward Christians and their responsiveness to the demonstration of meekness of missionaries.

Thai people consider the Christian witness of American missionaries and Thai Christians to be aggressive. Fieg (**1980** and 1989) compares eight cultural domains of Thais and Americans in detail. These eight cultural domains, in which the distinctiveness of cultural values can be contrasted, are as follows: (1) the concept of time, (2) the concept of work and play, (3) the concept of youth vs. age, (4) the concept of equality vs. hierarchy and rank, (5) the concept of materialism vs. spirituality, (6) the concept of change vs. tradition, (7) the concept of confrontation vs. avoidance, and (8) the concept of independence vs. dependence. Fieg shows how these differences in cultural concepts can hinder the intercultural effectiveness outcomes in communication.

The third part of this chapter is **concerned** with understanding the differences between the religious concepts of the **Thai** and Americans. For the Thai, religion is felt, not rationalized. Religion must be beneficial and contribute

to the felt needs of the Thai. This will serve as a foundation to understand the other viewpoints of religion in the minds of the Thai.

### Understanding Thai Value Systems and Behavioral **Patterns**

Dodd suggested that communication with a person from a different culture poses proportionately more ambiguities and uncertainties. Some **form** of predictability is needed to combat the uncertainty. A way to face uncertainty is to understand and manage the interaction stages typical of people **meeting--** precontact, contact and impression, and closure (Dodd **1995: 21**).

Understanding Thai value systems and behavioral **patterns** helps missionaries and Thai **Christians** to manage ambiguities and uncertainties in intercultural communication. This, in **turn**, draws the Thai to missionaries, to Thai Christians and to Christ.

Dr. Suntaree Komin researched for ten years to find Thai values and behavioral **patterns**. The findings of Thai instrumental values reveal the culturally **learned patterns** of social interaction, whereby Thai people **learn** to survive and function effectively in their society. The Thai social system is first and foremost a hierarchically structured society where individualism and interpersonal relationships are of utmost importance (Komin 1991:132). Knowing verbal language such as personal pronouns, suitable **words**, and **non-verbalisms** in each social level helps missionaries and Thai Christians to communicate and develop relationships **smoothly**.

Missionaries and Thai Christians who: (1) are willing to open their lives and perceive the goodness of Buddhism and Thai culture through intimate

dialogue with Buddhists as suggested by Zahniser (1994); (2) who allow the Holy Spirit to convict them and draw them to Christ in the first place as recommended by **Bavinck (1960)**; and (3) who create precontact impression formation to reduce uncertainty in intercultural communication will be the ones who first recognize verbal and **non-verbal** languages embedded in nine value clusters in the daily lives of the Thai (see Table **1**). They also will be able to overcome a violation of Thai cultural and religious values as well as to demonstrate Christ in such a way that it will be judged by the Thai as **meek** because of their value of meekness.

Missionaries and Thai Christians who apply any approaches which the Thai perceive as aggressive will automatically break the relationship, and effective intercultural outcomes will not occur. The Thai social system is reflected in the following nine value clusters on a continuum of psychological importance, from high to low, as enumerated in Table **1**. It should be born in mind that the higher the number in the order, the closer to the self and the more likely to be activated to guide actions (Komin **1991:133**). Under each value cluster, a description of behavioral **patterns** is provided. The elements of these descriptions and interpretations are recognizable to the Thai.

Table 1  
Value Clusters According to Their Relative Significant Position  
in the Thai Cognitive System

1. Ego orientation
2. Grateful relationship orientation
3. Smooth interpersonal relationship orientation
4. Flexibility and adjustment orientation
5. Religio-psychical orientation
6. Education and competence orientation
7. Interdependence orientation
8. Fun-pleasure orientation
9. Achievement-task orientation

### 1. Ego Orientation

The Thai are first and foremost ego oriented, characterized by the highest ego value of being independent, being one's self [*Pen tuo **Khongtua eng***], and having high self-esteem (Komin 1991:133). Thai people have big egos, a deep sense of independence, pride, and dignity. **They** cannot tolerate any violation of the **"ego" self** (Komin 1991:134) [e.g. Buddhism, the king, and parents (Beek 1983:163)]. Despite their cool and calm front, they can be easily provoked to strong emotional reactions if the **"self,"** or anybody close to the **"self,"** like one's father or mother, is insulted. Basically, it boils down to the question of **"face"** and **"dignity."** This value confirms the intuitive feelings of the Thai and

disproves Herbert **Phillips'** statement about the emotionless Thai who, due to low expectations about events or people, "**rarely** live at, or even reach, a high **emotional pitch**" (Phillips 1965:60).

Dodd mentioned that some cultures value emotional **expression**, but other cultures prefer reservation. While there are exceptions, Asian cultures generally practice reserve and emotional restraint (1995:121).

Though many analyses use Buddhist influence to explain the Thai's gentleness, their ever-smiling, non-aggressive manner and affability, and their high tolerance for uncertainty, they fail to explain the sudden emotional outbursts of **the** Thai (Komin 1991:133-138). Komin **confirms** the **other** end (emotional outbursts) of the psychological domain of the Thai.

Since Thai culture values "**ego**" and "**face**," straightforward, negative performance feedback, strong criticism, and face-to-face **confrontation** techniques and challenges should be avoided (Komin 1991:135). "**Face-saving**" is a key **criterion** in handling all person-related decisions, particularly negative ones. Compromise is often used as an effective means to save face and to keep the "surface **harmony**" even at the expense of some task.

In Chapter 3 we will see the meekness of missionaries who unconsciously utilized this orientation in the Christian witness and saw great fruit and outcomes. Some Roman Catholic priests and Protestant missionaries, however, unconsciously violated this orientation and experienced poor results for many years.

Christians should not compare religions verbally (LCWE 1980:6). They should have a sympathetic understanding of the Buddhists (1980:10).

Christians must show their sensitivity to the cultural ~~concepts of those to whom~~ they go and their credibility among the people they are reaching (1980:10).

Developing an intimate **dialogue**, using "close encounters of the vulnerable **kind**" and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide **Christian** witness, missionaries and Thai Christians may successfully overcome an irritation of the ego of the Thai in presenting the gospel and be able to lead them to a closer relationship with missionaries and Thai Christians and with Christ (Zahniser 1994:72 ; Bavinck 1960: 272).

## 2. Grateful Relationship Orientation

Reciprocity of kindness, particularly the practice of being grateful, is a highly valued characteristic in Thai society (Komin 1991:139). The Thai have been socialized to value this grateful (**Katanyu**) quality in a person. A person should be grateful to persons who render **Bunkhun** (goodness, helps, favors) to him or her (Komin 1991:140). **Bunkhun** must be **returned**, often on a continuous basis and in a variety of ways, because **Bunkhun** should not and cannot be measured quantitatively in material terms (Komin 1990:139-143).

This fact reveals why a missionary who taught science and English to a Thai king for only eighteen months, received numerous gifts and rights such as a place to teach Christianity in a Buddhist temple, lands, and the Edict of Religious Toleration in **return**. At the same time, this fact also reveals why missionaries who served as medical doctors and helped many Thai people

from sickness and death could not convince them of the love of **Christ**. Because the Thai have a strong ego, when missionaries contributed great *Bunkhun* to the Thai while looking down on Buddhism and idol worship, the ego was disturbed. They saw the grateful relationship **turning** into a **power-dominated relationship**. ~~The~~ relationship became a **"transactional interaction"** where there was no deep psychological bond. The ego was kept intact and independent, and the duration of the relationship had no meaning (Komin 1990:139-143). Christians should maintain good relationships (Komin 1991:200). This could be done by developing friendly relationships with families in communities over a period of time (**LCWE 1980:13**) without any strings attached (**LCWE 1980:12**).

### 3. Smooth Interpersonal Relationship Orientation

Unlike American's top values which tend to focus on self-actualization, ambition, and achievement, the Thai also place high value on a group of **"other-directed"** social interaction values, designed to project a picture of smooth, kind, pleasant, no-conflict interpersonal interactions, in short, the surface harmony observed by many (Komin 1991:143). This orientation is characterized by the preference for a non-assertive, polite, and humble type of personality (expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach), as well as the preference for relaxed, and pleasant interaction which accounts for the smiling and friendly aspects of the Thai people that fascinates most foreign visitors (1991:143).

This group of **"other-directed"** social interaction values are called **"social smoothing"** values (1991:143). The persons demonstrating these are as follows:

- (1) caring and considerate
- (2) kind and helpful
- (3) responsive to situations and opportunities
- (4) **self-controlled**, tolerant, and restrained
- (5) polite and humble
- (6) calm and cautious
- (7) contented, and
- (8) socially-related.

Komin continues to say that the findings of this group of values are significant for three reasons:

First, **five** out of about eight interpersonal related values emerged on the Thai value list but not on the American value list. They are: caring and considerate, responsive to situations and opportunities, calm and cautious, contented, and **socially-related** (Komin 1991:144).

Second, some of the **"social smoothing"** values have consistently secured the Thai significantly high rankings in the Thai value **system**. This finding means these values are deeply **internalized** and functional in the everyday life of the Thai. By knowing these five values, missionaries and Thai Christians are able to **learn** how to manage the interaction stage in intercultural

communication because the **Thai** are intuitive at observing and practicing these subtle social rules (Komin 1991:144).

Missionaries and Thai Christians may be able to achieve this ability by: (1) discovering ways that relationship affects content and content affects relationship (Dodd 1995: 29), (2) developing a curiosity about the meaning of culture, such as **cultural** structure, cultural thought **patterns** and logic, and cultural relationships (Dodd 1995:28), and (3) trying to look beyond the surface condition (1995:28).

Third, the finding is also significant in that it helps to shed some light on the **often-cited Buddhist** influence in shaping certain Thai characteristic traits, such as *Jai Yen* (calm, easy-going, not easily excited), *Mai pen rai* (contented, nothing really matters) (Komin 1991:144). Such characteristics have often been explained by the Buddhist teaching of the "**Middle Path,**" "**Detachment,**" "**Equanimity,**" and "**extinction of desires.**" But the findings of Komin show no significant differences for the whole group of "**social** smoothing" values between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims (Komin 1991:144). This calls into question the supposed religious influence of Buddhism upon the characteristic traits of the Thai. Komin mentioned that evidently these supposedly religion-related values are thus more **socio-cultural** traits that have no direct relationship to Buddhism (Komin 1991: 144). I do not agree that because Muslims from the same culture exhibited similar convictions these convictions are cultural and not from Buddhism. That could of course be true, but Christians in a Buddhist shaped culture and Buddhists in an **Islam-shaped** culture are bound to have

convictions similar to the Buddhists. Yes, it is clearly in the culture and a cultural feature, but it could also be the result of the long history of Buddhist shaping of the culture.

This finding provides some thought for any **future adaptation for** \_\_\_\_\_ witnessing to the **Thai**. There is no need to blame Buddhism at all. It is true that Buddhist doctrines provide great appeal because of their simplicity and face validity. But to look down upon Buddhism in order to construct a Christian foundation should be done with great caution, lest it mislead (Komin 1990:143-161).

It is important to note here that this particular group of "**other directed**" social interaction values, or "social **smoothing**" values, causes more confusion for missionaries and Thai Christians than any other. Social smoothing shapes their behavior when listening to the sharing of the gospel and may cause them, when asked by missionaries, to appear to accept Christ into their hearts. Missionaries may think they successfully shared the gospel and have won a soul to Christ, when in fact the Thai have responded positively on the surface in order to keep their social **smoothing**, allowing missionaries to do anything they wanted so they would **return** home as quickly as possible.

#### 4. Flexibility and Adjustment Orientation

Evidently, besides ego and smooth interpersonal relationships, the Thai are flexible and **situation-oriented** (Komin 1991:161). Komin provides data which indicates that while most Thai favor sincere interactions, they also value the flexible (*Alum aluy*) characteristics in persons (Komin 1991:164).

In general for the **Thai**, there **is** nothing as serious as being rigid or unchangeable (Komin **1991:164**). Because of this value, it is not surprising to find a **"decision-shifting"** behavior **pattern** quite common for the Thai, such as denying or postponing **decisions** to accept Christ, baptism, or appointments even though they said **"yes"** weeks prior. They might even switch their principles.

Basic to this **"switching"** behavior is always the personal conflict based on the "self," "their **group**," and the "situation," which are main motivating forces. It is always the person and the situation over principles and system (Komin **1990:161-171**). This helps missionaries and Thai Christians know how to witness. The Thai view missionaries themselves and what they do in various situations as more important in their conversion to Christianity than dogma or doctrines. If the doctrines can radiate through missionaries' lives, it helps the Thai come to Christ. This also helps missionaries in developing the meekness approach to the Thai.

##### 5. Religio-Psychical Orientation

Theravada Buddhism as the main religion of the country is professed by 95 percent of the total population. Undoubtedly it has directly and indirectly exerted strong influence on people's everyday lives. Most of them have little deep knowledge about it. In general, the Thai do not make conscious efforts to reach **nirvana**, nor do they fully and succinctly believe in **reincarnation**. They generally have serious doubts about the truth and validity of those other-worldly doctrines or notions such as rebirth, **nirvana**, and to a lesser extent, *Karma*

(Komin 1991:171). They are not taken very **seriously**. The Thai hold more of a **"this worldly"** orientation.

This finding helps missionaries and Thai Christians develop what we call **"a meekness approach to witnessing."** Theological arguments and apologetical approaches may fit those who hold high religion. But Komin (1991) suggested that the Thai do not make conscious effort to reach *Nirvana* or to hold high **religion**, nor do they fully and succinctly believe in **reincarnation** (1991:176). **Presently**, missionaries and Thai Christians try to persuade the lost to come to Christ so they will go to heaven, however, Buddhists are not interested in going to heaven or reaching *Nirvana* (Komin 1991:171). The future is not as important to them as is the present. They have numerous felt needs, and they apply the affective approach of folk religions in Thailand to feed their psychological hunger in a **modernistic** world. It is quick and practical to them from their perspective. **It** has been suggested that missionaries and Thai Christians can use a new strategy to fit their folk **worldview** by explaining that the goodness of Christ can help them in their suffering now. A rational or apologetic approach may not work well with the majority of the Thai people, but an intuitive, feeling, or affective approach, seeing Christ as the **"Man for others"** and the one who can deliver them from **all** fears, may be considered as a new way of meekness in Christian witnessing (Koyama 1968:16). **For** the Thai, religion is felt emotionally, not rationalized **cognitively** (Komin 1990:171-186).

## 6. Education and Competence Orientation

With regard to the value of education, the findings of the study revealed that educational values and competence hold a medium level of importance (Komin 1991:186). Knowledge for its own sake did not receive a high value in the cognition of the Thai in general. Education has been perceived more as a means of climbing up the social ladder, in terms of higher prestige and higher salary, than as an end in itself (Komin 1991:186).

This functional value of being labeled educated is very clear, and indicates that the Thai people give importance to form more than content or substance (Komin 1991:186). **Basically**, the Thai value good form and **appearance--the** proper respectable social front and all the status symbols and prestige that go with it. Since the Thai place high value on the **"ego"** self, the **"face,"** and social relations, these decorative, **external** labels and degrees are important. Possession of them identifies the owner with the respected class of society (Komin 1991:186). Labels are highly valued as indicators of prestige and honor, something to be possessed, with or without the real **worth--the** content.

This finding can help missionaries adjust their focus. The Thai people are not interested in the content of missionaries' teaching. If being Christian enabled them to get benefits and helped in finding jobs, knowing English, and opening up chances for a better life, they might consider being Christians. If being Christian brings persecution and rejection, then they **will** resist conversion. A new approach of meekness **will** lead missionaries to contact

**wider** groups in societies such as families, which can create a group movement. When being Christian is not harmful to society, and the new convert does not receive persecution, people might become Christians more readily. When the form is acceptable, missionaries can **plug** in the meaning in appropriate ways.

#### 7. Interdependence Orientation

In many cultures, cooperation is fundamental (Dodd 1995:122). Some Asian cultures emphasize group cohesion and loyalty (1995:122). This value orientation **reflects** more of the spirit of community **collaboration**, and in a **sense**, the values of co-existence and interdependence (Komin **1991:190**). The value of helping one another motivates cooperative behavior in the community and reinforces a sense of neighborhood. When a family is ill, suffers a death, or celebrates a wedding, neighbors will come and help that family in times of need or crisis. They bind their relationship through reciprocal services such as assistance and exchanges of food (Komin **1991:190**).

This other-oriented community value of interdependence and mutual help enhances the value of **co-existence**. Combined with the higher order values of **"ego," "smooth interpersonal relationship,"** and **"flexibility,"** these values help to facilitate the co-existence of different ethnic groups in Thailand (Komin 1991:189).

In the diary of Dr. Bradley, **Phra Klang** came to borrow the printing press from the missionary. Dr. Bradley replied that he could not let Phra Klang borrow it because the printing press was to be used to print the word of God only (Feltus **1936:41**). This caused a disturbance in their relationship. From Phra

Klang's viewpoint, Dr. **Bradley** was *Jai Dam* (not generous). These findings may help missionaries be more available for the people's needs. Phra **Klang** had a sense of **co-existence**, but Dr. Bradley had a sense of individualism. To **develop** a successful approach of meekness in Christian witnessing, American missionaries and Thai Christians should overcome the differences between the value systems.

#### 8. Fun and Pleasure Orientation

Thailand has been known as the "**land** of the **smile**," a stereotyped image accompanied by the popular myth of the Thai being easy-going, enjoying everyday pleasures with happy carelessness, not letting troubles touch them easily, viewing life as something to be enjoyed not endured, and not doing anything that is not **sanuke** (to have fun, to enjoy oneself and have a good time) (Komin 1991:191). They are easily bored or *Sua*, not because of having nothing to do like the **Westerners** but because of the repetitive activities they do that are not *Sanuke* (fun and enjoyable). They therefore lack the "**stick-to-it-iveness**," the serious commitment and the sustained level of hard (and often unpleasant) work, which is essential for the success of industrial undertakings (Komin **1991:191**). They are lethargic, lazy, unambitious, and fond of fun and leisure. To what extent is this myth true when understood in the right perspective? Evidently, many writings of this myth are derivations from the primary sources of Ruth Benedict (**1943**) and **Embree's (1950)** anthropological observations (Komin **1991:191**).

First of **all**, the general conclusion of the Thai as being lethargic, lazy, unambitious, and fun and leisure loving may not be true. **Komin's** data shows that this myth is mostly untrue. It reflects only the outward presentation of the fun and the lightness approach to things of the Thai (Komin 1991:192).

This myth can be looked at from two **perspectives--the** abhorrence of hard work, and the fun, leisure, and smiling aspects. As for the issue of abhorrence of hard work, research data showed that the private sector and the lower class did in fact work hard and ranked work over fun and pleasure (Komin 1991:192). As **for** the fun, leisure, and smiling aspects, they can be explained as resulting from maintaining pleasant and smooth face-to-face interpersonal interaction, which is highly valued. Many of the smiles which Thais employ in uncomfortable or distressing situations are used, in Herbert Phillip's **term**, as "**social cosmetics**" (Komin 1991:192). They are intended to relieve tension, to preserve the relationship and social harmony on which people depend for getting things done over the long run. Henry Holmes's and Suchada **Tangtongtavy' s** research reveals thirteen meanings of the smiles of Thai (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1995:25). Thai Christians are able to interpret the thirteen meanings of the smiles of the Thai more easily than missionaries. By knowing this fact, missionaries and Thai Christians can detect the interaction atmosphere in intercultural communication and adjust their Christian witness to fit the Thai value of meekness.

Most Thai social interactions are indeed pleasant, light, possibly superficial, fun and humorous in nature. These "**light behaviors,**" analyzed as

defense mechanisms, maintain the **joyful** front which the Thai genuinely enjoy (Komin 1991:192).

Does this smiling, friendly interaction with lots of fun and joyful behavior give a true indication that fun and pleasure are valued as ends in themselves, or are they a necessary means to function effectively in Thai society? Research findings suggest that this **fun-pleasure** value functions as an imperative mechanism, as a means to support and maintain the more important interpersonal interaction value. This is further substantiated when people are asked to comment on the statement, "**Life** is short, so one should enjoy as much as one **can**." Results show that there is more disagreement with the statement than agreement (Komin 1991:196).

Is this value helpful in evangelization? To this question, John Paul Fieg suggests that one of the reasons why there have been so few Thai converts to Christianity has undoubtedly been the failure of the missionaries to make their religion appear more *sanuke* (Fieg 1989:58). **Americans** in general are serious in doing things. Missionaries are serious in preaching the gospel. They are work oriented and want to accomplish things. This may be one of many reasons why the Thai perceive the Christian witness done by missionaries and Thai Christians as **aggressive**. The *sanuke* element is another key, and when coupled with meekness can result in successful evangelization in Thailand. This element will be discussed again in the next section.

### 9. Achievement-Task Orientation

This orientation is characterized by the achievement need emphasizing the **internal** drive toward achievement through hard work. Believing that hard work alone will propel one along the road to **success**, the **Western** work ethic has emphasized **personal achievement**, what one has done or achieved through one's best ability and hard work (Komin 1991:197). Because of this Thai value, missionaries and Thai Christians who are work-oriented and perceive Christian missions as something they have to strive to do by their own efforts, and who evaluate their success by the number of saved souls, may be disappointed and discouraged constantly in their Christian witness to the Thai.

Komin's research data shows the achievement value of being ambitious and hardworking to attain one's goals has been consistently ranked as least important. All Thais, without exception, ranked the hardworking achievement value much lower than the group of social relationship values. A closer look reveals that 64.9 percent of the Bangkok Thai and 55.2 percent of the rural Thai perceive maintenance of good relationships as more important than work (Komin 1991:200). A good relationship, not tasks, wins all. The generally low achievement value of the Thai should not be interpreted as abhorrence of hard work, but in the context of the Thai social value system, hard work alone is not enough. Keeping good relationships is much more important and very functional in Thai society.

Missionaries and Thai Christians who deal aggressively with Buddhist friends when it comes to the matter of religion, usually must endure shaky

relationships. Generally **speaking**, the longer they are Christians, the fewer Thai Buddhist friends and relatives they have. This seems to be a fact in many Thai churches in Thailand.

Although missionaries and Thai Christians had no intention of being aggressive, nevertheless when this orientation was demonstrated through Christian witness, it was judged aggressive by Thais because of their value of meekness in developing relationship with others.

In conclusion, task achievement value for the Thai is usually inhibited by social relationship values. While **submissiveness** and good relations, with or without work, have always paid off, tasks, especially those seen as threats or without submissive reactions to superiors, do not lead to success in life in the Thai cultural context. Achievement in the **Western** sense would not **fit** in a culture which values strong social relations.

A number of missionaries have the idea that Christians have to count souls and report to a church or organization as a way of evaluating their success. They may be work-oriented. When they meet together, they will end up asking how many members each group has. The question such as, "**How** many members do you have in your **church?**" was rarely asked in New Testament accounts. Good relationships with friends and relatives do not come into their conversations. Heroes are those who aggressively win souls for Christ. This may be a reason why mission work in Thailand fails. A new approach of applying meekness to the Christian witness in Thailand will be easier for Thai Christians than American missionaries. If they accept their

failure and are willing to adjust, I believe they will see success in their **Christian** witness.

### Understanding the Differences Between the Cultural Values of the Thai and Americans

This section is **concerned** with the contrast of eight cultural domains in which the distinctiveness of cultural values of the Thai and Americans can be understood. The contrast will help readers understand the reasons why missionaries and Thai Christians who follow missionaries' methods and strategies need to change their way of witnessing.

The cultural interaction study will point out problems and explain and predict what happens when individuals who have grown up in contrasting cultures interact and respond to persons outside their culture. Such a study will help missionaries live and serve the Lord more effectively in Thailand. At the end of each concept, I will add some suggestions so that American missionaries can prepare themselves for Christian witness in Thailand.

Similarities between Thais and Americans are definitely there, for both people are freedom loving, independent, practical, **down-to-earth**, individualistic, and self reliant (Fieg 1989:12). Both quickly **turn** away from arrogance, stuffiness, and pomposity. This is a strong common core of values which both peoples can build on as they sort out their differences. The eight domains of cultural values to be contrasted are listed below.

### 1. The Concept of Time

To Americans time is money (Dodd 1995:122). But in Thailand, particularly in rural areas, time is not generally equated with **earning** a living. Most farmers do not think of themselves as having lost money if they are forced to waste time. In **fact**, the Thai do not appear to have a strong notion of wasting time at all. Living close to nature's cycles and wishing to avoid the anxieties of **preparing** for the future or lamenting the past causes the Thai villagers to live mostly in the present time, enjoying all the passing moments (Fieg 1980:16).

Americans say, "**My** watch is running **fast**." Thais literally say, "**My** watch is walking fast (or **slow**).\" Americans say, "**Hurry, hurry**"; the Thai say "**Hurry**, but hurry **slowly**." Time to Thais is a slow moving pool which they can gradually walk around, not a fast moving river which they run to keep up with; time and tide wait for no one. Thais generally view time as a cycle with recurring phases. One season follows the next; one life leads into the another; one king's reign is followed by another (Fieg 1989:23). The values that cultures place upon time, however, cause numerous misunderstandings.

By knowing this orientation, allowing sufficient time for developing an intimate relationship, diffusion of the gospel and evangelizing whole families rather than evangelism of individuals, affirms this cultural value (LCWE 1980:11; Nida 1990:179). This value suggests that whole families and groups of families should be won to Christ if viable churches are to be planted and are to make an adequate impact on the community, and individual converts should be used to win their families (LCWE 1980:7). Delaying of a water baptismal

service for a new convert in order to win the whole family is affirmed by the suggestion of this cultural value.

A weakness of missionaries has often been the tendency to think that everything must be taught to the people at once, and that without thorough instruction, **superficial** Christianity or nominalism may be the result of their ministries. When missionaries leave the field, superficial Christianity or nominalism creates problems in local churches (Nida 1990:259). Without religious conviction, members of churches will not grow spiritually. Response at the time reflects social situations rather than religious conviction (Nida 1990: 203).

Missionaries should not be frustrated if an evangelistic program is delayed for sixty minutes or a worship service is delayed for twenty minutes. It is considered normal that when a missionary makes an appointment with a Thai, the appointment is always delayed. A Thai prospect considers it normal to come thirty minutes before or after the appointed time. Salvation can be postponed, as they see it, even to the next life. It is not surprising that when missionaries persuade Thais to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and they may say, "***Pomyung mai prome***" (I am not quite ready yet). Missionaries who are familiar with a thirty-minute gospel presentation and want Thais to accept Christ quickly may be disappointed repeatedly.

## 2. The Concept of Work and Play

Many cultures separate work and play. In these cases, work demands diligence, concentration, even tedium. Since play is considered frivolous,

combining work and play is unreasonable. Work and play do not mix. That view dominates some North **American** thought. In contrast, other cultures blend work and play. For the North American to insist on the divorce of work from frivolity and to judge others negatively is to invite estrangement (Dodd 1995:121).

The idea behind getting ahead, winning, and generally being above average has deep roots as a North **American** value. Competition also is valued, since it purportedly stimulates success. However, this notion of success and failure lacks correspondence in many other cultures. In many cultures, cooperation is fundamental (Dodd 1995:122).

The idea of hard work has its rewards in the United States. The American worker gains a reputation for immense productivity based on discipline, determination, and long hours of unremitting toil. The Thai do not look at work or **life** in that way. The lofty place that work occupies in the mental priority list of most Americans would be replaced by most Thais with *sanuke* (fun, enjoyment, having a good time).

From the Thai standpoint, if something is not *sanuke*, it is scarcely worth doing. Unlike the compartmentalized approach of Americans, Thais have the expectation that all of their activities will contain ***sanuke***. Work, study, and even religious service must have at least an element of *sanuke* if they are to retain the Thai's interest (**Ayal 1963:47-48**). In fact, one reason why so few Thai converts to Christianity is undoubtedly the failure of the missionaries to make Christianity appear more *sanuke* (Fieg 1989: 58).

One representative of an **American** foundation which supports Thai projects noted that he often calls a Thai organization and **government** office to explain the work of his foundation. He is frequently asked by Thais why he does this kind of work, “**I** go into a serious discussion about **objectives**” says the American, “**but** then **I** tell them **I** do this kind of work because its *sanuke*, and they understand right **away**” (Fieg 1989: 58).

The **internal** drive toward achievement through hard work of American missionaries sometimes unconsciously prevents them from developing long term, close knit, and *sanuke* relationships with the Thai without strings attached. They cannot see explicitly what the objective outcome of that relationship might be.

The story of Christ is *sanuke* by nature, because God loves us and decided to be a man named Jesus. **Thais'** minds and hearts should be touched by the gospel. Thai people do not like anything serious. Making the gospel alive is the key to evangelism. Verbal and **non-verbal** communication should be used in sharing the gospel. Indigenous media is the best for evangelization (LCWE 1980: 8). Missionaries who love *sanuke* can be used greatly in Thailand. Storytelling should also be used as much as possible.

Christians should not dump the information explicitly (Dodd 1995:99). They should communicate the person of Christ, not Christianity as religion (LCWE 1980:6). Christians should build personal relationships with them and seek to serve them humbly and lovingly (LCWE 1980:10).

I would like to repeat that for the Thai, religion is felt, not just reasoned. The Thai in general enjoy parties with good food, group amusement, singing, and games. Intellectual conversation and one-on-one conceptual interaction are not appealing. When an evangelistic meeting is arranged in such a way that the presentation of the gospel is proclaimed with a *sanuke* atmosphere, it affirms this cultural value.

### 3. Concept of Youth Versus Age

The respect North Americans have for their elderly is indeed pale compared with the high value placed upon the elderly in other cultures (Dodd 1995:117). Value of parental authority also varies culturally. North Americans typically stress individuality and making one's own decisions by the **midteens** (Dodd 1995:117). Accompanying this emphasis seems to be a disregard for parental authority and diminished communication with parents (1995:117).

Thai people show respect for the elderly and ancestral generations. Culturally speaking, a younger person should begin by *wais* (a gesture of respect which consists of placing one's hands together at the breast and bowing) to an older person (Fieg 1989: 58). Thai law does not allow men or women to sue their parents in court (Supap 1993: 62). To honor one's parents throughout life is considered one of the highest virtues. The social interaction in the Thai culture helps us to understand the Thai value **concerning** youth versus age as follows: (1) argument with parents or older persons are not encouraged and are sometimes prohibited, (2) a younger person should not teach religion to an older person, (3) a young man is able to teach religion to his or her own

parents when his status changes from **layman** to Buddhist monk, (4) parents usually guide or make decisions on important matters for their children (For example, a young couple could not get married unless ~~both sets of parents~~ agree), and (5) on a bus, monks, ladies, children, and old people usually have the seats. Others who occupy seats when these are standing should get up.

Most new missionaries and new Christians are young. They should pay respect by *wais* to an older prospect first, to affirm this cultural value. Such a first impression would help open their hearts to the gospel. This would show that gospel presenters were meek from a **Thai's** viewpoint.

A young Christian should share with an older person politely but not with a teaching attitude (Komin 1991:159). They should establish and maintain rapport with the family of the inquirer early. New converts should be encouraged to continue identification with their community (LCWE 1980:13). They should always be humble, loving, and responsible to their family.

A number of ways for missionaries to practice meekness in their manner in their homes need to be reinforced by the use of this value. They include: (1) missionaries should *wais* an older prospect first, (2) they should not argue or sit in a higher position than the owner of the house, (3) missionaries should not point the bottom of their feet toward the Thai, (4) missionaries' voices should be softer than the voice of the prospect, because Americans usually have louder voices than Asians, (5) "**Klab**" (an ending word of each sentence for men) and "**Ka**" (an ending word of each sentence for women) should be used by Christian men and women **respectively**. These words and actions help missionaries and

Thai Christians be more polite in the perception of Buddhists and help Buddhists to perceive the gospel in a smooth way. Following these suggestions helps missionaries and Thai Christians interact smoothly and **communicably** in Christian witness.

#### 4. The Concept of **Equality** Versus Hierarchy and Rank

Some **cultures** place value on hierarchy. In a number of those cases, the vertical differences between people are justified on the basis of harmony and what is good for all in the culture (Dodd **1995:118**).

Among many other cultures, however, norms prevail **concerning** the rule of inequality. Members of these cultures accept status and role differences and in some cases espouse those differences as natural for **orderly** existence (Dodd **1995:118**).

Americans are taught as school children that "**All** men are created **equal**." This value is taken from the Declaration of Independence as well as in the American psyche as **a "self-evident truth."**

This notion of equality has always been an ideal rather than an accurate description of social reality. The American founding fathers themselves apparently intended equality only for white, property-owning males. More precisely, it has always been equality of opportunity rather than **equality** of rewards which has been emphasized. If **egalitarianism** is the central theme in the American social structure, then hierarchical relations are at the heart of the Thai society. An anthropologist has summarized the basic Thai hierarchical **pattern** in this way :

Younger-elder, child-parent, **layman-priest, peasant-official--** bonds between inferior and superior compose the family the village, and the nation. In **return** for the service and respect of his subordinate the superior gives protection and leadership. In none of those relationships is there any provision for the inferior to challenge the wisdom of his superior to **express ideas of which his** superior might disapprove, **or to provide direction to his superior's** actions. (Fieg 1980:14)

This underlying **dichotomy** between two unequal positions, whether it be noble / peasant, patron / client, or simply superior / subordinate is capsulized in the Thai expression that there must be **"a little finger and a thumb"** in all social relations (Fieg 1989:37). Few Thais possess social equality because of age differences, family roles, or occupational states. This inequality influences them to live together and respect one another. Older and higher status persons should serve and help younger or lower status persons. The king should serve and take care of the people. Authority and power derive from the moral and ethical excellence of those who hold it. The king was the ultimate source of authority with an intricate hierarchy of nobles under him. Americans feel free to criticize, caricature, and even vilify their president if they believe his actions so **warrant**. Such denigration of the king would be unthinkable to a Thai and no greater cultural sin could be committed by an American in Thailand than to insult or even speak to the king in any but the most respectful terms.

The **significance** of the concept of hierarchically structured Thai society is **concerned** directly in intercultural communication. Thai society provides language, both verbalisms and non-verbalisms for each level of its structure for people to communicate to each other. For example, a young Christian girl who comes from a lower rank in Thai society may encounter difficulties in her

**Christian** witness to an aged male **government** official because their daily lives rarely intersect unless she takes a role as helper in his household. By knowing verbal and **non-verbal** language, such as behaviors and pronouns used in each level of social structure, missionaries and Thai Christians can communicate and develop relationships smoothly.

Thai people find it difficult to place missionaries and Thai pastors within their hierarchical system because most missionaries and Thai pastors in Thailand do not play a role or occupy a status that is **familair** in Thai **society**. They **learned** from the beginning that some missionaries were "**medical** doctors who taught **religion**" or "**Mo-Soen-Satsana**." "**Mo**" means a medical doctor. And the person who can "**Soen Satsana**" are the monks. Thais are able to place doctors, teachers, and monks in their hierarchical status, but they cannot locate missionaries who perform the three most important roles at the same time on their hierarchical scale. Missionaries and Thai pastors should try to make themselves fit into Thai culture by playing familair roles in their own communities. This does not mean that they have to leave their call as missionaries and pastors or full time workers. But they should at least consider giving a small portion of their time to involve themselves in their communities.

Missionaries and Thai pastors sometimes become outsiders in their communities because the Thai do not know how to relate to them. They also lose their opportunity to develop genuine relationship with Buddhists. I would like to suggest that any relationships which help the Thai to accept missionaries

as insiders affirms this cultural value. Missionaries **should** took to establish those kinds of relationships with the Thai.

When one Thai meets another for the first **time**, each must quickly and astutely ascertain the other's proper status in order to use the appropriate language and personal pronouns and treat each other according to the status accorded his or her position.

Thais do not know how to use personal pronouns with missionaries. This causes uneasiness in building relationships in the first stage of **cross-cultural** communication. **Missionaries** should understand themselves and define for themselves a clear status and role in the Thai society where they serve. This will help the Thai and missionaries to react to each other properly and more smoothly in their roles and status positions.

Opposition to the Christian message may be in many instances more social than religious. The social context not only affects the ways in which messages are transmitted, but also involves the manner in which they are decoded. The encoding of the messages can be done effectively **only** when these social factors in communication are considered (Nida 1990:202). Effective communication follows the **patterns** of social **structure** (Nida 1990: 203). To speak to a member of the royal family without using special royal language is considered too rude in Thailand. Christians should use words appropriate to rank and social status (Fieg 1989:36-39). Christians should show appropriate manners which fit the rank and social status

(Fieg 1989:36-39). A relevant witness will incorporate valid, indigenous social structure (Nida 1990: 203).

#### 5. The Concept of Material Versus **Spirituality**

Many cultures value material accumulation of goods and wealth. North Americans accumulate goods as a measure of wealth and success. The symbols of material **well** being and wealth obviously vary among cultures (Dodd 1995:122).

Dodd continued to mention that too often we prematurely judge a culture by its material **features**. A person who values technological features may overlook a rich cultural heritage in such areas as art, language, and interpersonal relationships. But Thai culture understands that spiritual growth is more important than amassing wealth. Material possession can sometimes be a sign of poor spiritual health and can be disruptive to society.

Unfortunately, some **Western** missionaries offend host cultures, both Christians and **non-Christians**, by their materialistic lifestyles which I believe are normal to them but disturb the host cultures greatly. A missionary who lives in a big house, drives a good car, dresses in good **Western** clothing, and eats good food in good restaurants can hinder his ministry with local Christian workers who work with him but live an opposite lifestyle. Non-Christians can misunderstand the Christian life. They may think that to be a Christian is only to be rich and blessed by God materially. A materialistic lifestyle can divert the **Thais'** intentions from spirituality to materialism. This can be seen from the questions they ask, such as : "**Will I** be rich if **I** become a **Christian?**" or "Can

your God **help** me get rid of my **debt**?" Devout Buddhists who deny the materialistic **worldview** and live ascetic lives may consider **Western** missionaries as persons who have a great deal of *gilade* (desire). They are considered to be **camal** persons. Buddha taught his followers to live with a few necessary things as Christ commanded his disciples.

"**Be** simple in your own **lifestyle**" is a good policy. The lives of many Peace Corps volunteers touch the hearts of Thais because they live a simple lifestyle. Thais would like to see missionaries live in simple ways. Missionaries should consider living their lives in such a way that they will not be a stumbling block to the spiritual growth of the people with whom they work. Lifestyles often speak louder than words. Christians should be able to show their meekness in their lifestyles (LCWE 1980:18). Christians should not use material goods as means to manipulate relationships (LCWE 1980:12). They should not pursue any hidden agendas in developing relationships (LCWE 1980:12).

The teachings of Jesus which helped to develop Thailand materially may change the Thai as a whole. Even though Buddhism is weak in this area, Thais believe in the development of the country as a whole. Missionaries who know their role and status in Thai society will be able to adjust their lifestyles to the **natives'** economic norm better than those who do not know their status.

## 6. The Concept of Change Versus Tradition

Cultures can be thought of as if on a continuum from relying on tradition at one end to embracing innovation on the other end (Dodd 1995:122).

Like **Americans, Thais** do believe in change, but they have never felt the same compulsion as Americans. In Buddhist values, change is the most certain thing of all; it is what existence is **all about--constant** cycles of *ubat* (birth, beginning) and *wibat* (death, ending, passing away). Since change is so **all** pervasive, it would be presumptuous, foolish, and certainly futile for humans to interject themselves in an active way into this process.

The point is that everything is going to change by itself; **government**, companies, and mundane problems **will** all come and go. Instead of worrying about how and when these changes will occur, it is better to keep one's emotions under control, restrain one's **concern** over life's vicissitudes, and try to develop the wisdom to see how transitory all things really are. Changes often bring about underlying conflict, which Thais prefer to avoid. Thais, responding on the basis of deeply ingrained, culturally based attitudes, are much more likely to prefer retaining the status quo than going through the painful, **soul-**searching process of identifying problems and placing blame on things that require change. Thais do not want to speak up or create conflicts, especially with those with whom they have no close relationships.

It is recognizable how family members in certain cultures cause group embarrassment, or shame, for all family members. Anytime a child violates norms or law, the shame potential exists (Dodd **1995:118**).

When a person demonstrates outwardly a departure from Buddhism to Christianity (**e.g.**, going to the church on every Sunday and Wednesday, saying grace before meals, praying and reading the Bible in their homes openly), it

shames all family members. By knowing this fact, missionaries and Thai Christians are encouraged to seek to bring change inwardly in the **person's** life and show outward ethical change to the family first.

Missionaries should not require an instantaneous conversion from the Thai unless the Holy Spirit does his work in their hearts (LCWE 1980:11). A change should come naturally by the power of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of Christianity should be stressed more than the form. It is the duty of the church and the new believers to help communities and their families in the early stages of cross-cultural communication to understand this change. The perception of the families and friends is aggravated by the convert's joining the church, by which he often alienates himself from his family and friends who look upon him as a traitor to the community. The main results, therefore, are: (1) the Christian believer is socially ostracized, (2) the antagonism of his family and community toward Christianity becomes a barrier to their evangelization, and (3) joining the church is interpreted as joining an alien community.

Christians should solve this problem by establishing and maintaining rapport with the family of the inquirer early, explaining to them that the new believer remains a member of his family in the community, even though he has transferred his faith to Jesus Christ. The change is inward and personal, not social or national (LCWE 1980:13). Missionaries should also encourage new converts to respect their culture and their social networks. Some Thai cultural features should be redeemed and serve as contact points for the gospel. The goodness of Jesus Christ should permeate Christians' lives, not the lifestyle of

Westerners. Manifest destiny should not be used, and a **head-on** approach to witnessing should be prohibited (**Seamands** 1981:75). Missionaries' attitudes concerning Buddhism and Thai cultures must be corrected.

**Christians** should approach Buddhists with humility and loving persuasion, backed by the testimony of a dynamic personal relationship with Jesus (LCWE 1980:10). A Christian's credibility is vital to the audience's acceptance of their message as credible (LCWE **1980:10**). Christians should not present the gospel as a challenge but as offering benefits and help (LCWE 1980:10).

Thai society is in **the** process of change now. A number of elements in Thailand are undergoing **change**, such as the culture, the economy, the family, etc. There are also unmet needs. Health problems, social security, and economic welfare need to be improved. The present atmosphere is a good time for missionaries to introduce changes by being a liberating force in education and social crises. This could bring about a real change in Thailand.

## 7. The Concept of Independence Versus Dependence

At the heart of a North American's identity is self-reliance. A Chinese anthropologist, Francis Hsu, points out that the self-reliant American, however, strives to eliminate from his life both the fact and the sense of dependence upon others (1981:293).

In Thailand, the relationship is one of dependency. One such — relationship is that of patron and client. The patron, like a parent, is totally responsible for the welfare of his clients. He not only provides them with basic

food stuffs and a small **income**, but must also give them blankets when their old ones are in **tatters**, extra rice when a festival comes, and straw for their cattle when the supply runs out. Clients, in fact, can ask a patron for whatever they think they may grant, but this is not considered begging any more than when **Christians** ask God for help.

Because of the above reason, the social network or web in Thailand is closely knit together. Missionaries should not be **surprised** when young Thais are asked to accept Christ and say that, "**Let** me go back home and ask permission from my **parents**." Individual conversion will separate a Christian from the social network and stop church growth. Missionaries should dare to win the whole family. Group decisions should be the target and goal of missionaries. In the U.S., individual conversion is correct and fine, but not for the Thai. Family conversion is preferred and needs to be tested, even though it will take time. For most Americans, the family is a small group of people, not an extended network (Althen 1981:48). For the Thai, the family includes more distant relatives. A conflict should not occur between a new Christian and his or her family. Missionaries who are **work-oriented** persons may have to "**Jai Yen Yen**" (become cool hearted) (Fieg 1989:42). This cultural value affirms that to be effective in witnessing, missionaries must not only play the role of religious teachers but also brothers, fathers, and family members.

For this reason, Christians should be able to guide receptors in keeping a good relationship with their parents both before and after conversion (LCWE 1980:11). Christians should realize that the individual should be used by God

to bring the whole family to Christ (LCWE 1980:11). Missionaries and Thai Christians should teach new converts to be humble, loving, and responsible to their families and to depend on their families in the time of need (LCWE 1980:13). Although the church and mission organizations are ready to support new converts in various ways, they should not encourage new converts to violate this orientation. A number of new converts in Thailand renounced this cultural value just to prove to their families that God is able to support them. And some of them showed to their parents explicitly that they wanted to depend on God, missionaries, and the church, not on their families anymore. Their families sometimes interpret this situation as aggressive and see it violating **cultural** values. This unnecessarily creates **unhealthy** relationships between Christian and Buddhist communities.

#### 8. The Concept of Confrontation Versus Indirection (Avoidance)

The American preference for bringing problems out into the open and discussing them in a frank, candid manner so that "**we** can see exactly where we **stand**" contrasts sharply with the Thai tendency to avoid direct confrontation so as to preserve surface harmony (Fieg 1980:61).

Thais hate confrontation. Among Thais, however, serious and permanent damage is done to a relationship when a stage of open argument is reached. Face-to-face conflict is not viewed as a satisfactory solution to most problems. In Thailand it may not only be necessary but also desirable to beat around the bush in order to forestall an abrasive, open clash. Such an approach can appear evasive and insincere to Americans, whereas the

**American** style can be seen as harsh and insensitive by Thai standards.

Americans tend to see events as problems to be solved (Stewart and Bennett 1991:155). Americans naturally confront problems in a direct manner.

Christians should be aware that Thai people have big egos, a deep sense of **independence**, much pride and dignity. They cannot **tolerate** a violation of the ego self (Komin 1991:133). Christians should not make the Thai lose face in the process of confrontation; and in some instances, Christians should avoid criticism (Komin 1991:135). Missionaries should develop a **"Krengjai"** quality (consideration for others) (Holmes and Tangtongtavi 1995:46) and should not show their aggressive personality (Komin **1991:146**). All **confrontive** strategies, especially direct confrontation of all kinds must be avoided (Fieg **1989:76**; LCWE 1980:10). Christians should rely on the faithfulness of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit and not pressure people (Bavinck **1960:247-272**). They should seek to relate to others as neighbors and equals, regarding their beliefs as worthy of serious consideration.

A guideline for missionaries in this matter is to use an *elenctic* approach to cross-cultural communication. This means that Christians should develop a meekness approach by opening their lives to the Thai and trusting the convincing work of the Holy Spirit (Zahniser **1994: 71-78**). An inductive approach is encouraged. Arguing and forcing the Thai to receive Christ is not wise. Christians should avoid harshness when talking about religion (Feltus 1936:135), and developing friendships is one of the best ways to start (Nida **1990:175**).

The **confrontive** spirit of Western missionaries can be used in a specific manner in Thailand. The gospel can heal Thai fears and even create a dynamic push to help Thais realize they are somebody, not just people in Southeast Asia, but people chosen by God with a purpose for their existence and a place in history (**Nida 1990:258**). A number of fears lurk among Thais, including ghosts and suffering. The dynamics of the gospel of Jesus Christ can release them from fear. If they do want to confront the Thai, missionaries should use the gospel as an instrument to confront ghosts and thereby help rid the Thai of their fears (**Nida 1990:257**). When a Thai comes to know Christ, he or she has unlimited resources to rely on, such as the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and prayer.

#### Understanding the Differences Between the Religious Concepts of the Thai and Americans

In this section, I would like to compare the religious concepts of Americans and the Thai as systems. Christians and non-Christians in Thailand have perceived Christianity as a religious system. Its coherent doctrines can be rejected or accepted as a whole system (**Hughes 1989:41**). This whole system will be viewed and discussed in this section as: **(1)** the differences in theological concepts, and **(2)** the differences in experiential concepts.

##### 1. The Differences in **Theological** Concepts

In this section I will mention five points of differences between the theological concepts of the Thai and Americans. First, the difference between the theological concepts of Americans and the Thai rests upon their attitudes

toward God (Hughes 1989:41). **Theravada** Buddhism holds atheistic ideas. God and gods are not necessary. **American** Christians hold a **theistic** idea. There is one God, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, Creator, Redeemer, and Judge (**Seamands 1981:173**). This first contrast means that Christianity suggests people rely on a Power outside of themselves (Hughes 1989:43). The religious concept of the Thai does not provide help and aid with coping in their lives from outside sources. When crises and difficulties occur in Buddhists' lives, Christians may use this concept to introduce Christ as the way out of problems.

Second, amidst the **impermanence** of the world and life that Buddhism stresses, there stand as E. Stanley Jones said, the unchangeable Christ and the unshakable Kingdom as the Bible affirms (Seamands 1981:174).

**Modernization** and rapid change in the **socio-economical** system speeds up the natural impermanence of Buddhistic ideas to a degree that may bring crisis to Buddhists' lives. Introducing Christ and his unchangeable words for Buddhists to hold onto in the times of crisis and suffering may affirm the usefulness of the differences of this value.

Third, Buddhism centers on **humans--their** needs, their efforts. Christianity centers on **God--his** purpose and his provision (Seamands 1981:173). When Buddhists encounter a dead-end street in their lives, they usually seek invisible means of support in various forms. Some Buddhists may accept that this is derived from their Karma but most of them seem to seek outside sources for their psychological coping. When this situation occurs and

Christians introduce **God's** provision as new hope for their lives, this may affirm ~~the usefulness in~~ the Christian witness to the Thai. The research of Dr. Philip J. Hughes, a professor at Payap University, Thailand, affirmed this fact in his **book**, Proclamation and **Response** (1989).

Fourth, Buddhism claims there is nothing **eternal** or immortal inside the human **body**, no permanent ego. Christianity claims that human beings have **eternal** souls, that individual existence and selfhood are real (Seamands 1981:174). This concept can be used in dialoguing with Buddhists. Using the Buddhist position, Christians may ask them that if there is no permanent ego in the human body, what element is it in the human body that perceives **Nirvana**. There must be something there since the human body is able to perceive it, otherwise Buddhists would not know whether they have reached it or not.

Fifth, the basic teaching in Buddhism is that of suffering. The basic problem in Christian faith is sin. Salvation to the Buddhists is being released from suffering, receiving deliverance from the endless chain of birth-death-rebirth. Salvation according to Christian scriptures is deliverance from sin and reconciliation to God. In Buddhism, each one works by his own effort to achieve salvation through meditation, good deeds, and knowledge. The Christian faith declares that no one can save himself or herself. Salvation is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8) (Seamands 1981:175). The difference in this concept may be used in the Christian witness by introducing indigenous analogies as follows. Thai Christians may suggest to Buddhists that it may not always be true that human beings are able to deliver themselves out of their sins. In Thailand, on

every December 5, King Rama IX releases thousands of prisoners from jail before their terms have been fulfilled. This ~~is done by his own pi~~ of his sheer grace. Those prisoners who have been released come to know that their freedom, which they received from the **King's** kindness, was not derived by their good works.

## 2. The Differences in Experiential Concept

Philip Hughes (1989:45) cited a 1989 statistic that there are at least 30,000 Christians in **northern** Thailand. These people left Buddhism to become Christians. Hughes wondered what is it that attracted these people to Christianity?

He found in his research that these people contacted Christian families. Christianity gives these people meaning. Christian values were planted into their hearts. They learned that they can depend on God in times of trouble (1989:45).

Hughes did his research by conducting a survey of Buddhists and Christians who live in the **northern** part of Thailand in 1981. He provided questionnaires to 386 Thai Buddhists, 71 Thai Christians who had not studied theology, and 42 missionaries associated with the Church of Christ in Thailand (1989:48). One question asked was what were the reasons why religion was so important to them. Ten reasons were suggested which the students rated in terms of their importance to them. It is interesting that for eight out of the ten reasons for the importance of religion, the responses of the Christians and Buddhists were very similar. Buddhism was important to Buddhist students for

the same reason that Christianity was important to the Christian students (Hughes 1989:46). Both religions were said to give their adherents a sense of **well-being** and happiness, a sense of meaning in life, and provided opportunities to their members to help other people (Hughes 1989:46).

Those who converted from Buddhism to Christianity experienced the care and **concern** of Christians, particularly when facing some problem of one kind or another. Hughes suggested that the results of the questionnaires among students, and of interviews conducted in the churches, revealed that few people responded to the gospel because of its message of salvation and forgiveness of sin. For the Thai Christian students, forgiveness of sin was seventh out of ten reasons for the importance of religion. On the contrary, missionaries who responded to the same question mentioned that forgiveness of sin was the primary reason for the importance of religion.

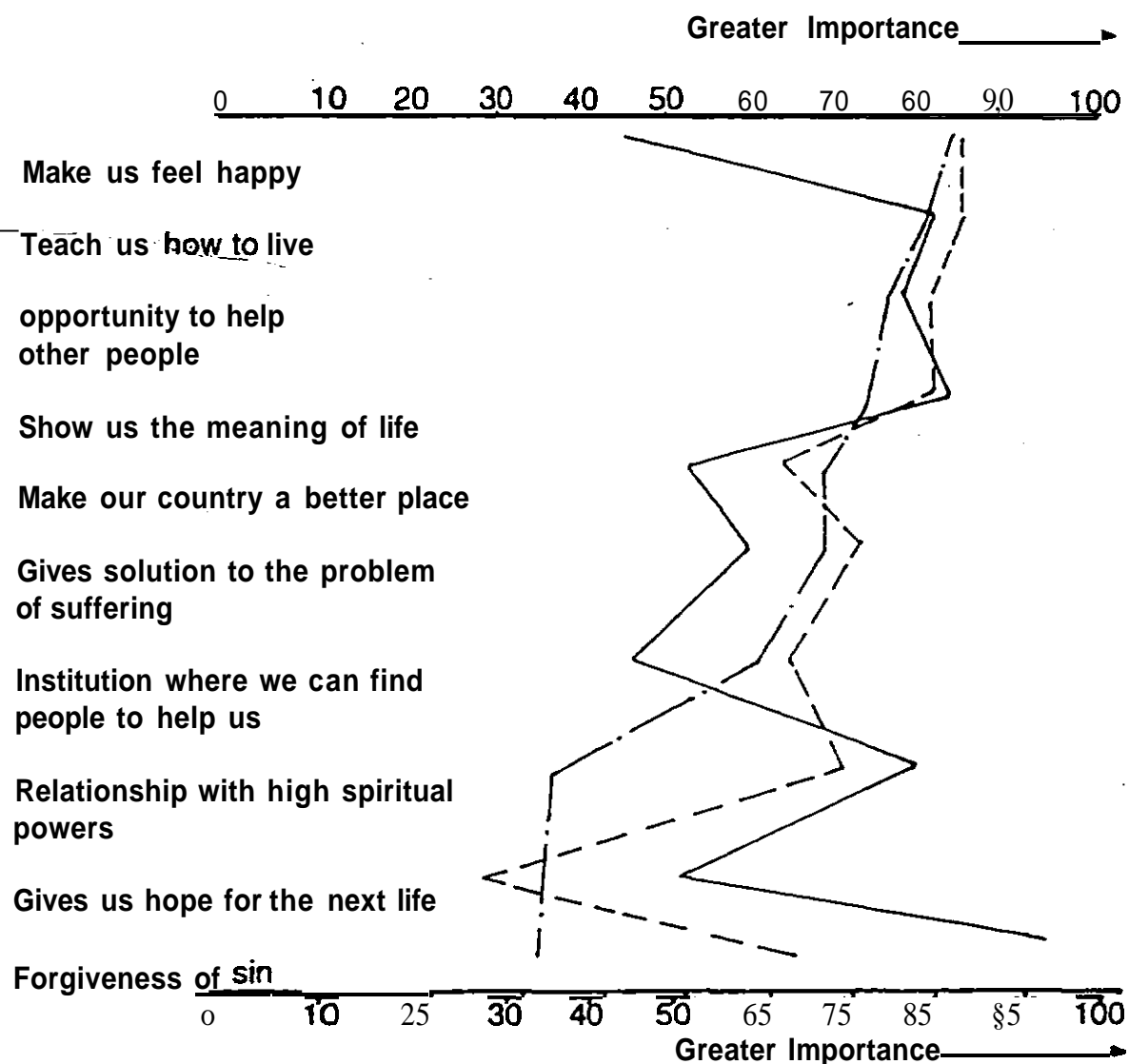
This may be the reason why missionaries have kept on witnessing and preaching, passing the message of the gospel through the cognitive domain of the Thai. Missionaries must overcome their difficulty with differences in numerous religious words between the two religions. Words such as God, sin, love, and salvation produce different meanings in the minds of the Thai. **Time** for diffusion of the gospel may be required. This may be one reason why sharing the gospel with Buddhists in a short period of time and challenging them to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior brings frustration to missionaries as well as to Thai Christians.

If salvation and the message of the gospel are not perceived by Buddhists to be of primary importance at first, what is? Hughes' research provides a graph in Figure 1 which shows at least three areas of significance shared between missionaries and the Thai.

First, Thai Buddhists and Christians agree that religion make them feel happy. A good religion must touch our affective domain, make us feel happy. Missionaries seemed not to agree with the Thai because religious values of missionaries are **concerned** with the doctrine of salvation from sin, but the Thai are interested in practical outcomes of religion. Thai Christians agree with Thai Buddhists in this matter, implying that **Western** Christianity could not change the religious values of Thai Christians to be like American missionaries. This implies that when the Christian witness provides the Thai with benefits and help, it may affirm this finding of differences in religious values.

Second, missionaries are **concerned** with the importance of the forgiveness of sin in witnessing to Buddhists while both Thai Christians and Buddhists are not.

The third difference is that Christianity offers its followers a relationship with a Spiritual Power. For many people this is the crucial difference between the two religions. It is when people feel that they no longer cope by themselves and they need help from outside that Christianity offers good news. Christianity attracts people in trouble for it tells them that they can **turn** to God and depend on God's help (Hughes 1989:47).



- \_\_\_\_\_ = a group of 42 missionaries associated with the Church of Christ in Thailand
- ..... = a group of 71 Thai Christian students at Payap University not studying theology
- ..... = 386 Thai Buddhist students at Payap University

Source: Hughes, Philip J. *Proclamation and Response*.  
Thailand: Payap University Achieves, 1989, p. 48.

Figure 1

Illustrating the relative rating of ten reasons for the importance of religion by groups of Thai Buddhist and Christian students and a group of missionaries working in Thailand

### Summary

This chapter is **concerned** with who the Thai are and how they differ from **Americans** in their **cultural** and religious values. Understanding these values will help missionaries and Thai **Christians develop strategies for bringing** the Thai to Christ more successfully than before. The strategies developed will follow Thai cultural and religious values which tend to be softer and gentler in the minds of the Thai. I want missionaries and Thai Christians to be more **concerned** with Buddhist perception and responsiveness than with the old way of presenting the gospel.

The first part of this chapter dealt with the nine value clusters of national character of the Thai. These help missionaries and Thai Christians understand the Thai and how to deal with them, and how to introduce Christianity to them in an acceptable way. The second part contrasted eight domains of **cultural** values of Thais and Americans. This helps readers to see values in daily lives more clearly. Lastly, the third part of this section discussed a comparison of religious concepts of Americans and the Thai. The research of Hughes reveals three important points: **(1)** the Thai perceive that religions should make them happy while the missionaries do not think that way, **(2)** missionaries are **concerned** greatly with the importance of the forgiveness of sin while the Thai are not, and **(3)** Christianity offers its followers a relationship with a Spiritual Power while Buddhism does not. These factors can be used as characteristic elements of meekness in affirming the Christian witness **in** Thailand in Chapter

3 and designing a meek approach to Christian witness in Chapter 5 for missionaries and Thai **Christians**.

## CHAPTER 3

### Manifest **Destiny** in the Siam **Kingdom**

Thai ~~value systems and behavioral patterns~~ operated actively in the context of Christian mission history in Thailand, creating differences in perception, demonstration, and responsiveness between the communicators of the gospel and Thai Buddhists. This chapter reveals the promises and the problems of both Roman Catholics and Protestant Christian missions in Thailand through citing incidents of Christian witness and evaluating these according to criteria discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter also reveals the differences between an aggressive approach and a meek approach while demonstrating to missionaries and Thai Christians the outcomes of these two approaches.

The history of Christian mission in Thailand in this chapter is divided into two groupings, Catholic and Protestant. Each group has two eras, early and modern: early Roman Catholic missions (1511-1688), early Protestant missions (1828-1910), "modern" Roman Catholic missions (1688 -1980), and modern Protestant missions (1910-1980).

The main criteria or tools for evaluating Christian witness are summarized and identified again at the beginning of this chapter. At the end of each era, a summary will indicate whether the historical events involving missionaries and Thai Christians worked positively or negatively in regard to the meekness **approach**. A summary analysis of Christian witness in Thailand concludes the chapter.

Komin (1991) and Fieg (1980 and 1989) provide **criteria** for evaluation of the concept of meekness in Thai culture and religion. Seamands (1981) ~~provides elements~~ in which the differences in theological concepts between Americans and the **Thai** can be applied to Christian witness. Hughes (1989) gives three major elements in which the differences in experiential concepts can be adapted to Christian witness.

This chapter consists of six sections: **(1)** criteria for measuring the Thai concepts of meekness, (2) early Roman Catholic missions in Siam **(1511-1688)**, (3) early Protestant missions in Siam **(1828-1910)**, (4) modern Roman Catholic missions in Thailand (1688-1980), (5) modern Protestant missions in Thailand **(1910-1980)**, and (6) summary analysis of Christian witness in Thailand.

#### Criteria for Measuring the Thai **Concepts** of Meekness

Several areas of cultural preference have already been noted. Together these form an approach to Thai people recognizable as meekness. Violation of these results in less effective Christian witness.

Development of a long-term, sincere, genuine, meaningful, and smooth relationship with no strings attached has been perceived by Buddhists as meekness in Christian witness (Komin 1991:143; LCWE 1980:12). Any relationship which does not value the *Alum Aluy* (flexibility) characteristic is considered aggressive by the Thai (Komin 1991:164). A hidden agenda used in developing a relationship, or material goods used as means to manipulate a relationship are considered aggressive (LCWE 1980:12).

For the **Thai**, a number of **characteristic** elements of reciprocity in relationship exist. The Thai value relationships highly. Those who do not maintain a relationship for its own sake but ~~use it to accomplish something~~ else are considered aggressive; e.g. using a relationship to convert people to Christianity.

A missionary or a Christian should be grateful to persons who render *Bunkhun* (**goodness**, help, favors) to him or her (Komin 1991:140). Those who hold principles and systems more important than persons and situations are considered aggressive by the Thai.

Missionaries and Thai Christians should be characterized by preference for a non-assertive, polite, and humble type of personality (expressed **through** appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach), as well as preference for a relaxed and pleasant interaction (Komin 1991:143). Reciprocity of kindness, particularly the practice of gratitude, is a highly valued characteristic in Thai society (Komin 1991:139).

This relationship can be broken if missionaries and Thai Christians violate the identity or **"ego"** self (Komin **1991:13**). For example, missionaries must not look down on the king. They must not speak or write anything about the king if they do not have clear knowledge about him. Missionaries should not compare religions or say that Buddhism is evil or exerts satanic power (LCWE **1980: 6**). They should not be harsh when talking about religions (Feltus 1936:135).

Loss of face, criticism, confrontations of all kinds, and aggressive personalities demonstrated by missionaries and Thai Christians are not encouraged in relating to the Thai (Komin **1991:135**; Fieg **1989:76**; LCWE **1980:10**). A meek-approach is always equated with a sympathetic understanding of Buddhists (LCWE 1980:10), and with a sensitivity to the cultural concepts of those to whom Christians minister (LCWE 1980:10). Christians should seek to serve humbly and lovingly (LCWE **1980:10**), should be able to show meekness in their lifestyles (LCWE **1980:18**) supported by the dynamic testimonies of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ (LCWE **1980:10**). Thai meekness means that Christians should seek to relate to Buddhists as neighbors and equals, regarding their beliefs as worthy of serious consideration (Bavinck **1960:247-272**). Missionaries and Thai Christians should allow the Holy Spirit to convict themselves and through missionaries and Thai Christians he convicts the world (Bavinck **1960:272**). When missionaries and Thai Christians allow the Holy Spirit to convict Buddhists, a number of aggressive words and deeds will be absent from their Christian witness. When the Holy Spirit convicts anyone, he draws them closer to Christian communities and Christ in a powerful way.

In a close-knit culture such as Thai culture, communicators of the gospel should extend a meek approach and a meaningful relationship to the family and communities of new Christians or seekers. This approach can help in cross-cultural communication when seekers become Christians. The entire group may be converted to Christ or at least will not oppose new Christians. When

**missionaries** violate the ego self or the **identity** of the Thai, they may cause a relationship to end.

Christian witness to the Thai always takes time. Evangelism is the proclamation of the good news in words as well as its manifestation in deeds, with the purpose of reconciling men and women to God (Rainer 1989:77). Christians should allow enough time for the gospel to diffuse in the minds of the Thai and should not expect them to make an immediate decision for Christ (LCWE 1980:11). Christians should not be interested in merely dumping information (Dodd 1995:99).

A meek way should not be a serious way though the subject itself is very serious. The Thai perceive the gospel message well as long as it is presented in *sanuke* and *Jai Yen* (cool-hearted) (Fieg 1989:42). Christians must rely on the faithfulness of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit rather than pressuring people (Bavinck 1960:247-272). Christians should open their lives to the Thai and trust the convincing work of the Holy Spirit in Christian witnessing (Zahniser 1994:71-78).

Thai Christians and missionaries should be gentle and vulnerable in initiating intimate dialogue (Zahniser 1994:72). This, in **turn**, will enable Thai Christians and missionaries to cross cultural barriers and become insiders of Buddhist communities.

Missionaries and Thai Christians who seek to do a major overhaul of religious grids in the minds of the Thai by imposing the new grid of Christianity without explaining the power of the gospel to touch needs are considered

**aggressive.** Communication is not smooth but rough. This intention serves as a wedge to separate the established relationship between Thai Buddhists and Christian communities.

Buddhists are not interested in **"forgiveness of sin"** at first, but they will listen to how Christianity can make them happy or help them to live ethical lives.

Readers should keep in mind these tools for measurement of Thai meekness and observe the demonstration of the meekness of missionaries, priests, and Thai Christians in Christian witness in Thailand in the past. These criteria can aid understanding the promises and problems of Christian witness of the early and modern eras of the Roman Catholic missions and the Protestant missions.

#### **Early Roman Catholic Missions in Siam (1511-1688)**

The purpose of this section is to portray how the Roman Catholic priests witnessed to the Thai, their perception of the Thai, their understanding of Roman Catholic missions, and the way the Thai responded. This section will offer a historical basis for understanding the psychology of the Thai as related to Christianity.

The first Portuguese came to Thailand in 1498. The Catholic Directory of Thailand states that Roman Catholic missions first entered Siam in **1511** (Smith 1980:35). The Spanish claim to have sent missionaries to Siam as early as **1585**; fifteen years later, Don Tello de **Aguirre** came from Manila to make a treaty of friendship and commerce with Siam (Thompson 1967:217).

Until the **late** seventeenth century, all Catholic missions in the East were controlled by the Portuguese. The majority of the priests were Jesuits, but there were also Dominicans at **Ayutthaya**. The saying, "The Cross followed the flag," means Catholic priests followed Portuguese soldiers and traders (Knapp 1968:2).

France began to concentrate her attention on expanding mission fields in the Indochina peninsula. At that time, Siam was ruled by King Narai (1656-1688) (Thompson 1967:168). But French Roman Catholic priests came to Siam prior to the reign of King Narai in **1622**, and by **1688** had established a seminary and a number of chapels. Upon the death of King Narai that year an anti-French reaction swept the capital of Ayutthaya and French priests and monks were driven from the country or jailed (Wells 1958:5).

French missionaries did not begin by proclaiming the gospel or trying to impose Christianity on the Thai. They began through social work which seemed to anticipate a bright future for Christianity in Siam. They presented **Christianity** as a benefit and a help (LCWE 1980:10). Missionaries also contributed great cultural work such as the writing of a dictionary, a grammar, and accounts of the lives of the saints in Siamese. Roman Catholic priests built forts and other buildings as well as installed a printing press.

When politics and religion come together, they cooperate and help each other in some areas but create confusion in others. Mention should be made of Constantine Phaulkon, an English adventurer who arrived as a linguist well versed in the intricacies of foreign trade. With such rare and desirable

qualifications, he joined the office of the Phra **Klang** (Treasurer) and won rapid promotion as a Thai nobleman. He became Chao Phaya **Wijayen**, the king's favorite (Kim 1974:36).

Through the intermediary of the French missionaries supported by **Constantine Phaulkon**, Thailand and France exchanged embassies. In **1685**, Louis **XIV** dispatched Chevalier de Chaumont as the first French ambassador, accompanied by **1,400** French soldiers and 300 skilled workmen under the direction of Ceberet aud de la Laubre in 1687. King Narai reciprocated his friendship by sending four ambassadors to France with Phra **Witsutsunton** or Kosa Pan leading them (Kim **1974:36**). Phra Narai (King Narai) responded to the missionaries, showing his grateful relationship by providing land and materials for building a church and compound to be named for St. Joseph (Thompson 1967:171). The Thai king demonstrated reciprocity of kindness to the missionaries (Komin 1991:139). By 1688, missionaries had established a seminary and a number of chapels (Wells 1958:5). The king ordered an official to attend the services at St. Joseph and to report to him regularly on the sermons; missionaries were often seen at court discussing religion with the king and his ministers (Thompson 1967:173). This showed that the king was responsive to situations and opportunities in building up a closer relationship to the priests (Komin 1991:143).

The charitable works of missionaries were understood as **Tam Boon**, which can be equated to accumulating good works for the future life in Buddhism. The king could see for himself the goodness of Christianity through

**charitable work**, while Buddhist monks did not perform such good works. The king was so impressed he sent ten small boys to the mission school to be taught European sciences. Phra Narai even showed greater interest in the mission by accepting pictures of the life of Christ, remarking that Catholicism **was a fine** religion. In **1668**, some Muslim missionaries arrived at Ayutthaya with the same goal of converting the King, but Phra Narai reassured the uneasy French missionaries that if he ever changed his religion, it would certainly not be to **Islam** (Thompson 1967:173). The Thai seemed to be able to observe, compare, and come to their own conclusions about the differences between Buddhism and Christianity without comparing the two religions verbally and explicitly. Their perceptions caused them to ask serious questions. They questioned the bishop about the power of France and asked him **if** he thought Christianity was better than Buddhism. The Bishop, feeling it would be tactless to be too trenchant in his reply, dwelt only on the virtues of Christ. The bishop seemed to know that he should not give a straightforward answer or strongly criticize Buddhism or compare Christianity and Buddhism verbally (LCWE **1980:6**).

The kindness of the Thai king toward the missionaries unfortunately was misinterpreted and misunderstood by the priests. Their hope of converting him was aroused and with it their patriotism. This situation had probably been previously stimulated by their conflicts with the Portuguese (Thompson **1967:171**). When the plan of converting the king was revealed, it was perceived by the Thai as violation of ego self orientation (Komin 1991:133-138). Priests threatened the identity of Thai officials (Komin 1991:134). **Nevertheless**,

the Siamese remained indifferent to high-pressure evangelization; they were willing to accept the **missions'** charity, but with surprise and curiosity rather than with gratitude or admiration (Kim 1974:37). In March, **1688**, Siamese jealousy and fear that the Catholics, through **Phaulkon**, were about to convert the king ignited a violent anti-foreign revolution (Smith 1980:36) which was particularly anti-French. In **1688**, just before the death of King Narai, Phaulkon was arrested and beheaded. Catholic priests were banished or imprisoned. The violent fall of Phaulkon shocked French officials and **frightened** the tiny Catholic constituency. Following the Phaulkon Revolution, the Catholics made few inroads among the Siamese population.

Even a century later, The Catholic Directory of Thailand declares that in **1785** the Roman Catholic church in Siam totaled only 1,372, comprised of 413 Siamese of Portuguese origin, 379 Cambodians of Portuguese origin, and 580 **Annamites**. Most of those lived near the capital in Thonburi-Bangkok (Smith 1980:36). The Catholics planted only six churches during their 300 years of mission work (Wells 1958:5). This incident demonstrates **clearly** the other end of the Thai psychological **domain--emotional** outburst of the Thai (Komin 1991:133-138).

A heavy blow fell on the Catholics due to the Phaulkon affair, its anti-Christian repercussions reverberating down through succeeding decades. That episode **long** remained in the astute minds of Siamese leadership and became a source of hesitation toward later Protestant missions as well (Smith 1980:36).

Can missionaries and Thai Christians **learn** any lessons from the Catholics? Yes. Their ministry at the beginning was very **bright**, positive, and promising because they had developed a relationship and presented Christianity as love, care, sympathetic understanding, plus benefits and help to the Thai (LCWE 1980:10; Komin 1991:143). Missionaries shared their better educational systems, scientific knowledge, and manpower to construct forts for the safety of Siam. This helped meet the needs of the Thai. Missionaries contributed to the welfare of the Thai communities as a whole. The Roman Catholic priests had their own power and goodness to attract the king, Thai officials, and communities. The Thai participated in the Catholic educational system, worshipping God at the chapel, accepting pictures of Christ, dialoguing about religions freely at the court, confessing that Christianity was a fine religion. Even the **king** said that if he were to accept a new religion he would accept Christianity rather than **Islam**. It seems that what missionaries demonstrated thus far fit perfectly with the Thai way of meekness because they came closer to Christian communities and to Christ by their own initiatives. Upon being asked to compare religions, the priests were clever to share the positive character of Christ only. Thus the Thai were not threatened. They accepted Christianity with open arms and their ego self was not disturbed by missionaries. They moved toward Christ or the ethical teachings of Christ actively and naturally on their own.

The problem started when **Constantine** Phaulkon climbed the political ladder to a high position and began to show his intention of converting the king.

At **this** point Thai officials felt **insecure**, envious, and threatened by the missionaries. The lack of communication to officials on Phaulkon's part made them perceive that Phaulkon violated and threatened their identity (Komin 1991:133). It should be observed that the Thai moved toward Christianity as **long** as the priests demonstrated passivity in converting Thai people. When Phaulkon showed explicitly his desire to convert the king, his ministry failed.

The high position of a foreigner in the king's palace, the open intention of Phaulkon to convert King Narai, the presence of French soldiers in Siam, and the lack of communication between missionaries and officials were four **major** factors that threatened the Thai officials. These factors may have caused them to interpret the overall activities of France and French missionaries in Siam as an attempt to overthrow the king, Buddhism, and the country. Siam might be ruled by France if the ruler did nothing. The Thai perceived the intention of Phaulkon and the Catholic priests as aggression-violation of ego self and in **turn**, they responded aggressively to French missionaries (Komin 1991:134). As a result, the work of Roman Catholics was banished from Siam.

It is thus possible to conclude at this point that the historical incidents involving the Roman Catholic missionaries worked positively toward the meek approach at the beginning but later worked negatively against the meek approach at the end. The Thai concluded that the whole ministry of the priests was aggressive toward them. **If** the missionaries had continued as before, the whole Thai community would probably have embraced Christ in time.

The Protestant pioneer **missionaries** who came in **1828** encountered some difficulties because the Thai, remembering the past, kept an eye on the new missionaries and allowed them to evangelize only among the Chinese at first. Thus a delay occurred in the spread of Christianity to the Thai and the bad impression created in Siam by Catholic missions in the past came to remind the Thai again in the early Protestant period.

#### Early Protestant Missions in Siam (1828-1910)

The first attempt to propagate Protestantism in Siam seems to have occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century (Latourette **1944:243**). No connection existed between Roman Catholic missions and the first Protestant missionary to Siam. There is no record that any Protestant missionaries studied the history of the **early** Roman Catholic missions in Siam.

Nevertheless, both groups had something in common--the Cross followed the flag. Protestant missionaries in the early nineteenth century demonstrated to the Far East the advancement of science and technology of the **Western** countries in the enlightenment period. Colonialism in the nineteenth century demonstrated its belief in "**manifest destiny.**" Commerce, politics, and religion went to Asia in the same ship. This affiliation brought strong points as well as weaknesses to Christian missions in Siam.

The perception of the Thai and their responsiveness in this period can best be demonstrated by four missionaries and two Thai Christians in a number of incidents as they witnessed for Christ: **(1)** the Rev. Jesse Caswell, an American missionary who had worked in Siam during **1840-1848**, was

affiliated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.); (2) **the** Rev. Stephen Mattoon, D.D. (1847-1865), and the Rev. Dr. Samuel **House**, M.D. (1847-1876), were American missionaries affiliated under the American Presbyterian Board; (3) the Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D., was one of the most important American missionaries to Siam; he joined **A.B.C.F.M.** during **1835-1848** and the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.) from 1850-1873, and (4) Luang Petch **Songkram** and Nang Buo Lai, were two Thai Christians who demonstrated their Christian witness in the Thai way. I will discuss House and Mattoon together because they demonstrated their social **concern** to the Thai and worked together closely in the same denomination in Siam.

#### 1. The Christian Witness of Rev. Jesse Caswell

The Rev. and Mrs. Caswell came to Siam in **1840**. He had been working closely with the **Prince-priest** (King Mongkut) for three years. The ministry of Caswell is recorded in Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928 (1928). This book was edited by the **Rev.** Dr. George Bradley **McFarland**, M.D., emeritus professor, Royal Medical College, Chulalongkom University, Bangkok, Thailand. The Rev. **Dr.** Dan Beach Bradley also recorded the ministry of Caswell in his own diary, edited by the Rev. George H. Feltus in Abstract of the **Journal** of Rev. **Dan Beach Bradley. M.D.:** Medical Missionary in **Siam(1835-1873) (1936)**.

Early in **1840**, the Siamese department of mission was strongly reinforced by the arrival of Caswell (**McFarland** 1928:19). Upon arrival,

Caswell was visited by many of the nobles and the princes. He took an early opportunity to pay his respects to the Phra Klang and the Prince Chao Fa Mongkut (the **Prince-priest**) at his residence in Bovomives Monastery.

Caswell was most kindly received by both of these men because he showed respect **for** the **elderly**, nobles, and princes in Siam (Reg 1989:56; **McFarland** 1928:39).

King Rama **III**, who reigned in Siam from **1824-1851**, was suspicious of missionaries and Christianity. Caswell knew that either King Rama IV or Prince Mongkut, who at that time was the Abbot of a temple in Bangkok, would be the next king. Caswell developed a close friendship with Prince Mongkut. The Prince invited him to tutor in English and science at *Wat **Bovomives***, a well known temple in Siam. The role and status of Caswell fit very **well** into Thai culture, for teachers have always been the most respected persons in Thailand. The status of Caswell made him the giver and Prince Mongkut the receiver. This status promoted a grateful relationship from Prince Mongkut to Caswell in later years (Komin **1991:139**). In exchange, Caswell had the use of a room in which to preach and distribute tracts.

Prince Mongkut, soon to become King Mongkut, was already a Pali scholar and a **learned** man, and he proved a keen student of **Western** culture, including science, religion, politics, and commerce. This period of study lasted for about three **years**. The grateful relationship demonstrated by the Thai king brought a great change in the history of Christian mission in Thailand when he ruled Siam in 1851. The research of Komin confirmed the grateful relationship

orientation of the Thai (**Komin** 1989:139). The measure of the friendship that sprang up between the two men is indicated by the attendance of the Abbot **Prince at** Caswell's funeral in September, 1848, accompanied by a gift to Mrs. Caswell of a roll of white silk. After ascending the throne in **1851**, King Mongkut did not forget his former friend and tutor. He sent **\$1,500** to Mrs. Caswell in the States, a large sum at that time, and he erected an appropriate monument over **Caswell's** grave. Donald **C. Lord**, professor of history at Texas Women's University, wrote in 1969: "**The** relationship between the two men, the Buddhist monk and the American missionary, was one of the most important East-West friendships in Thailand's **history**" (Lord 1969:167).

Through the kind teachings of devoted missionary friends like Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and his colleague, Jesse Caswell, King Mongkut became the first Asian monarch to read, write, and speak as well as understand the English language, and the first to become a student of the Christian religion. Both of these factors greatly influenced and contributed to making the missionary movement in Thailand a unique chapter in the history of the Christian church (Kim 1980:41).

The grateful relationship of King Mongkut did not stop with Caswell and his family, or Bradley and the rest of the missionaries in Siam, but extended to the top leader of the United States. One of the prized documents in the archives in Washington **D.C.** is a friendly letter from King Mongkut to President Abraham Lincoln offering elephants for transportation, a letter which President Lincoln answered with appreciation and dignity (Wells 1958:10).

Bradley wrote about the blessing of God upon the **ministry** of Caswell.

This incident was recorded on November **21, 1845**, in **Bradley's** diary.

Brother Caswell seems to be blessed by God in his work at **Chao Fa** Yai's temple where he has an interesting class of **priests** studying the English language, among whom is the prince [Chao Fa] himself. After teaching them about an hour he retires to a room which the prince has fitted up for him to preach the Gospel and to distribute tracts and there he labored more directly as an ambassador of the Cross of Christ. He reports several interesting hearers. Today, he had a fine opportunity to distribute tracts to a large company of royal personages and their attendants who came to make a present to Chao Fa Yai. The Prince himself first proposed that he gives books to these **individuals**. It is pleasant to see by such a proof that there is nothing like introduction of our books in the King's palace or in the Royal family. Who knows what amount of good the many precious tracts which Brother Caswell gave away today, and which will be carried into various of the royal families, will do. (Feltus 1936:102)

Caswell had spent three years teaching **Western** sciences, English language, and Christ to Buddhist monks. Caswell **led** one monk to Christ, and when the Prince-priest was asked by many monks to punish the man who forsook Buddhism, the prince replied that all Buddhists were free to choose any religion they wished (Feltus **1936:22**). According to the criteria for measurement of the Thai value of meekness, Caswell's ministry was meek (Komin **1991:139**). There is no record that Caswell criticized Buddhism or confronted the prince or monks. His actions worked positively toward the meek approach. He chose unconsciously the role and status which fit the Thai **context--teacher** of the future King Mongkut. He developed a long-term, genuine, sincere relationship with no strings attached with the prince-priest and Buddhist monks in the Temple (Komin 1991:139). He humbled himself by taking an early opportunity to pay his respects to Phra Klang, one of the top

ranking **government** officials in Siam (Komin 1991:143). In the Thai hierarchical culture, the people admired foreign missionaries or Thai Christians who first came to pay respect to the head of the community before starting their **ministries**. This means that Caswell seemed to know the **receptors'** culture well.

**Caswell** demonstrated Christ through his lifestyle first and brought Christianity as a benefit and help to the people to whom he witnessed. His relationship to the prince-priest was smooth and impressive. Caswell harbored no hidden agendas. He showed openly to the prince that his desire was to teach Christianity to him and the monks. The grateful relationship of the Thai caused the prince to provide opportunities for Caswell to do what he wanted. The prince gained the knowledge, and in exchange Caswell got opportunities to preach. Caswell sought to serve the prince humbly and lovingly. He did not force Chao Fa to accept Christ but spent time for three years teaching him and relating to the monks in the temple. Caswell's attitude toward Buddhism was not recorded, but the fact that he taught, slept, and worked in the temple for years implies that he did not mind being close to Buddhism and Buddhist monks who lived in the temple.

Caswell **turned** himself successfully from a **Western** missionary who used to live in a mission station to an insider among Buddhist communities. He made the prince-priest love him. Caswell's vulnerability and his ability to initiate an intimate dialogue with the prince-priest and Buddhist monks for long years brought the prince-priest and many monks closer to Caswell and Christianity by their own initiatives.

The reaction of Chao Fa Mongkut implied that he was impressed by and grateful for Caswell's labor. As proof, he attended **Caswell's** funeral service, providing a gift of white silk and \$1500 to Caswell's widow in the States, allowing missionaries to possess the land for Christian missions, and issuing an edict of Religious Toleration for all Siamese. **Caswell's actions worked** positively toward the meek approach. If Caswell had not died young, and if he had kept using the same method, he would have seen the results of the meek approach to a greater degree.

2. The Christian Witness of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel House. M.D. and the **Rev.** and Mrs. Stephen Mattoon

The Rev. Dr. Samuel R. House, M.D. **(1847-1876)** and the Rev. Stephen Mattoon, D. D. (1847-1865) were pioneer missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission. These two missionaries were beloved missionaries to the king and to the Thai. They led many to Christ and helped the sick and the poor. The first and the best known girls' school, **Wattana** Wang Lang, was established by them. Their stories and Christian witness are recorded in Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam **(1828-1928)** (McFarland **1928**), and Samuel **Reynolds** House of Siam: A Foreign Medical Doctor From **1847-1876** (Feltus 1982). These two missionaries led two Thais to Christ, as recorded in the documents above.

In **1848**, Mrs. Mattoon began to teach some little girls and boys; later she opened a school in a Peguan village near the mission compound. At one time this school had an enrollment of twenty-seven pupils. Siamese and Chinese

parents brought their children to the mission **compound**, which later formed the nucleus of a boarding school. The concept of training children in the mission compound was the same concept of training Thai boys by Buddhist monks in temples, an indigenous method in which the lives of trainers shaped the lives of students through relationship. The missionaries may not have copied from Buddhism deliberately, but certainly they followed a path which flowed along the grain of Siamese culture. Additionally, Or. and Mrs. House were given Nai Naa by his dying father in **1853**, and Nang Esther was given by her father to **Dr.** and Mrs. Mattoon. Esther lived with them and when finally Mrs. Mattoon was obliged to **return** to America because of ill health, Esther accompanied her and the children. She **retumed** to Siam three years later, having studied nursing in the United States. She then continued to live with Mrs. Mattoon in Siam, teaching a little class of eight or ten children to read Siamese. These two became great Christians in Siam, with Nai Naa serving as the first native Presbyterian elder at a later time. Nai Naa married Nang Esther in **1863** after Esther joined the church in **1860**, and they had over a hundred grandchildren and great grandchildren in Siam. She was the first woman convert and the oldest living Protestant Christian in Siam in 1928 (**McFarland** 1928:45-46). It should be noted that the Houses and the Mattoons applied Thais' concept of time to Nai Naa and Nang Esther (Fieg 1989:23; LCWE **1980:11**). The results were fruitful. Dr. House helped the sick and the poor without charge. His profession brought him in contact with all sorts of people. No records suggest that these two missionaries looked down upon Buddhism and Thai culture.

House took Boon **It**, a Siamese boy, to the United States and supported him while he studied in a seminary in New York. Boon It **returned** to Siam after studying in New York for seventeen years. In his native country he served the Lord faithfully until he died. He showed his grateful relationship to missionaries by refusing the high position of **governor** offered to him by the Siamese government.

If these incidents are analyzed using the criteria listed at the beginning of this chapter, it is evident that **Dr.** House and the Rev. Mattoon selected roles fitted to the **context--doctor** and teacher. In accepting Nai Naa and Nang Esther into their families, they themselves became insiders in the Siamese communities. To be insiders, one should **learn** to depend on the authority and the community in which one lives (Fieg **1989:42**). These two missionaries took the role of parents. They gave their lives to their Siamese children and developed **parent-child** relationships. They lived together for long **years**. Their lifestyles impressed their children greatly. Nang Esther asked the church to put a photo of the Mattoons into her casket, for she loved them as her parents.

The relationship of Dr. House and Boon It shaped the life of this great Thai minister. Here was a **long-term** parental relationship. These missionaries devoted their lives to raising only one Siamese for God. They rendered *Bunkhun* (goodness, helps, and favors) to these children (Komin 1991:140). The role of parents demonstrated politeness, humility, kindness, and a sympathetic attitude through the lives of the Houses and the Mattoons (Komin 1991:143). The message of the gospel was absorbed through the lifestyles of

**missionaries** in words and deeds. This method eliminated criticism, confrontation of all kinds, aggressive personality, and manipulation. The actions of these missionary couples worked positively toward the meek approach.

### 3. The Christian Witness of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley

The greatest pioneer among the American Board missionaries and the most influential missionary for Christianity in Thailand was the Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, a Presbyterian. He and his wife reached Bangkok on July **18, 1835**. Dr. Bradley received the M.D. degree on April 2, 1833, and began to read theology in his spare time (Feltus **1936:1**). He began the custom of memorizing a passage of Scripture each **morning** and then writing a meditation upon it, which frequently assumed the form of a sermon outline. When he came in contact with the Rev. Charles G. Finney who was conducting a revival meeting in New York City at that time, Finney's zeal for evangelism induced Bradley to preach the gospel.

Numerous incidents are recorded in his own diary, edited by the **Rev.** George H. Feltus in Abstract of the **Journal** of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley. M.D. Medical Missionary to Siam (1835-1873) (1936). The diary contains intimate comments on public men and affairs during a period before **journalism** began to provide a record for current events. The manuscript itself comprises twenty bound volumes, each averaging 500 pages. The entire **journal** runs from **1830** to 1873, including a few years of Bradley's life in America, and covers the period of transformation in Siam brought about by the opening of the country to free

intercourse with the West in the nineteenth century. The original document is at the Oberlin College library, **Oberlin**, Ohio. His own writings will recount a number of incidents and the results of Christian witness. At the end of each **incident**, a summary using criteria discussed in Chapter 2 will allow us to judge whether his actions **worked** positively toward or negatively against the meek approach.

Readers will see the mixed behavior of Bradley's Christian witness in this section. It should be observed that when Bradley demonstrated his unplanned **Christian** witness in deeds through his charitable works such as saving peoples' lives or helping them to get rid of their diseases, the Thai seemed to be appreciative and recognized Bradley's love and kindness. But when he performed planned witnessing, his hearers felt pushed away from him and Christ.

It is interesting to see that Bradley's Christian witness in words always pushed people away from himself and from seeking God. His Christian witness in deeds, in contrast, drew many thousands closer to himself and Christ's love. His planned Christian witness in presenting the gospel seemed not to work as well as his unplanned social responsibilities. Bradley's kindness in curing the Siamese also opened opportunities to share Christ's love. The sincere and genuine responses of missionaries to a fellowship extended by the Thai led to a wide opportunity to preach the gospel. Bradley recorded on October 29, **1835**:

Dined at Luang Nai Sit's, in company with all my missionary brethren, **Messr.** Hunter, Hayes, **Marcellino** and several officers of **government**. The hall in which the table was spread aped a European hall more than anything I have yet seen in Bangkok. It

was large, airy and very comfortable in **temperature**. I must confess that I find myself not a little at a loss how to make the best improvement of such seasons. I am not without great fears that my time thus spent is poorly spent. (Feltus 1936:14)

Eight days **later**, Luang Nai Sit extended a deeper fellowship to **missionaries** and provided by himself an opportunity for missionaries to preach the gospel:

November 6, 1835. . **Brother** and sister Johnson called at my house in the evening bringing the intelligence that Luang Nai Sit had invited them to go with him to **Chantaboon**, a province in the East to spend six months with his family, teaching him and his wife and his children the English language and at the same time having the liberty of distributing tracts to the multitudes of Chinese which reside at that place. This province seemed to display clearly the hand of the Lord and it was encouraging inasmuch as heretofore there have been no opportunities presented to missionaries stationed here to explore beyond the bounds of this city. We thought that we would hardly mistake the language of Province to wit: That some one or more of the missionaries ought to embrace the opportunity to carry the gospel to that city. It is suggested that as my **health** seems to require a change of air and that as such an excursion as that to Chantaboon would very likely benefit me, I make an effort to go in the place of Brother Johnson. (Feltus 1936:14)

Bradley's social works drew many thousands to himself. His kindness in curing diseases of the Siamese made them invite Bradley to come closer to their lives and families. Bradley wrote:

August 5, 1836. . **It** is a year today since I opened dispensary in Bangkok, during which time I had treated about 3,500 different individuals. The larger majority of these I have under my care on an average I presume of three weeks. About **two-third** of the whole have come from the country, many from great distance. (Feltus 1936:33)

On November 27, 1837, Bradley decided to visit his patients who got healed. They lived along both sides of Chao Phaya River. He recorded in his

dairy that the patients who saw him gladly invited him into their homes and brought food and fruit to serve him. Bradley could discuss with them naturally (Feltus 1936:48). This gave Bradley a wide opportunity to talk about Christ to them. He decided to do this kind of visitation again and again since he began to see its potential for developing relationships with the Thai.

Sometimes Bradley examined his patients on Saturday and conducted a service on Sunday. His love and care for his patients sometimes brought sixty patients to worship God on Sunday. On Saturday, February 13, 1836, Bradley wrote:

I have written 112 prescriptions today, which I did in less than two and a half hours. I attended to the **minutia** in my prescriptions as much as is common in American hospitals. It is deeply affecting to see the multitudes crowd around me as if I was in the possession of the keys of life and death. Some desperate cases are presented. The subjects or their near friends approach me in most anxious inquiry whether I can cure them. If I answered in the negative, as is not infrequent, they seem to feel that their last hope is blasted. What an opportunity is given me to direct these suffering sinners to an Almighty Physician. (Feltus 1936:21)

On Sunday, February 14, 1836, a large number of his patients came to join worship service. Bradley recorded:

Our religious exercises at the dispensary were more interesting than they have been any time before. About 60 patients were congregated at the commencement of the service. This number was much increased before the close. We were favored with the presence of Brother and Sister Jones. In addition to the usual exercises Brother Jones led a prayer and gave a most engaging exhortation to the patients. It was delightful to see with what intentness every eye was fixed upon the speaker and with what **eagerness** they seemed to receive the Truth, At the close of our services our floating chapel was entirely blockaded with the boats of our hearers and others who stopped to wonder at our doings. I presume there were more than fifty of these crowded **together**. I

then prescribed for **100** patients which occupied me until late in the **day**. (Feltus 1936:21)

Even fifteen years after his ministry in **Siam**, the charitable works of Bradley and his credibility deeply impressed the Siamese. He wrote:

**Kroma** Kundet sent his boat to receive me in the **afternoon** as he wished me to see his sick son and prescribe for him. **I** went and had very pleasant interview with his royal highness and found his son suffering from his troublesome cough. His father said he had heard that **I** had devoted myself almost entirely to preaching and distribution of Tracts and did not practice medicine any more and that therefore he hesitated to send for me. That he could not trust his Siamese physicians but could trust me and wished to put his son under my care for he had seen me perform wonderful works such as he had never seen the Siamese physicians perform. Said **he**, "If you cure him, **I** shall not mind giving you two or three changs of **silver**" (a *chang* is 80 *ticals*, about forty-eight dollars). It was at this prince's palace that **I** once performed the operation for cataract in his presence and gave his servant sight. The prince was greatly delighted with the result and said in the fullness of his heart that **I** was not a human doctor, but angelic. (Feltus 1936:124)

These opportunities led to discussions of the gospel. Bradley did not start to **witness**, but the Thai started by themselves. Bradley recorded in his dairy on July 29, **1850**:

Had a visit from a Barean of Thun **Kramarun's** temple. He **came** expressly to talk with me on religious subjects. **I** had discussion with him about an hour touching the evidences of the truth or falsehood of Buddhism. He took occasion to complain of one of Brother Jones' tracts, entitled "**Golden Balance**," because he quoted from Siamese Books which are not regarded by the new school as canonical. He said that he and all of the same do no more believe in the books which he cited as authority than we do ourselves. He said that the pure instructions of Buddha were but few, only thirty books and that all the others once regarded as sacred are mere works of fiction. He acknowledged that a great majority of the people still adhere to those rejected books. He adduced several prominent arguments from the teaching of Buddha to prove that his instructions were better and more to be regarded than the instructions of Jesus Christ. The first was, he

thought that it was wicked to have any love toward any person or **thing**, and the reason of this was that love is the root or source of human misery. His second argument was that Buddha taught that it was wicked to marry. He talked long and very ardently on these **points**, but he found himself sadly embarrassed when I showed him that these instructions of Buddha resolved themselves into one leading and all controlling principle which is men shall love no person or thing beside themselves and that they may and ought to love themselves supremely and alone. I showed him how mean and how wicked it is to be **governed** by such a principle and that the other of the precept must have been no other than a very wicked man. I contrasted these precepts with the Holy law of our God which requires equality of love toward one another and supreme love for God. His reply to this was that this requirement was impossible for men to obey and that therefore it could not have come from a holy and just God. (Feltus 1936:123)

The discussion continued to the next day. Bradley discussed various theological matters between Christianity and Buddhism. August 30, 1850, he met two Buddhists at the Tract House. He wrote:

Had interesting discussion with two persons at the Tract House. One man said he could not believe anything which he had not seen with his own eyes or heard with his own ears. And that therefore he could not believe in anything I say about Jesus Christ. I asked him if he had seen China. **"No."** **"Do** you believe that there is such a **country?"** Seeing what I was coming at he said he did not believe that there was such a country. Knowing him to be a worshipper of Buddha I then asked him **if** he had ever seen Buddha or seen anyone that had ever seen him? **"No,"** he said. **"Well,** do you believe that there was such a **person?"** Finding himself **comered** and not willing to yield a point he said that he did not believe in Buddha although he worshipped the image of Buddha. A priest said that the instructions of our books were of doubtful authority because they require men to love their neighbors and themselves, which said he is impossible and the true God would not require an impossibility. Said I to him, **"What** does Buddha **teach?"** Said he, **"He** requires that men shall love anything but become as insensible to all incentives to love or desire as a block of **wood."** In reply to this I said, **"Is** this not as great an impossibility as that of loving our neighbors as **ourselves?"** This was a new thought to him and he was not prepared to reply it. (Feltus 1936:124)

Bradley spent 157 days enroute to **Siam** on the ship Cashmere. He and his wife traveled from Boston and stopped at Maulmain, Burma, where they went first to the grave of Mrs. **Adoniram** Judson. Bradley **learned** from a local church there the method of the Rev. Thomas Simons, a missionary who worked in Maulmain. He wrote in his diary:

December 11. 1834. . . **His** church consists of about fifty members. On looking over a catalog of the names and several facts **concerning** them, **I** was struck by the great proportion that had been brought to repentance through the use of tracts, religious conversation, reading the Bible and so on. Only five or six had dated their first religious impression to the ordinary preaching of the gospel. (Feltus 1936:4)

Bradley arrived in Siam on July **18, 1835**. He had begun to use tract **distribution** too and continued this method of propagating the gospel for **fifteen** years. After using this method for two years, he wrote in his diary: "**July 18, 1837.** . . **I** feel from my heart that **I** have been a most unprofitable servant of my Lord and Savior Jesus **Christ.**" (Feltus 1936:44).

Bradley seemed to realize that the method of propagating the gospel by tract distribution which he **learned** in Burma might not be the best way to evangelize the Siamese. However, he kept on for thirteen years in that direction. He also developed a negative attitude toward Buddhism:

August 14. 1837. . . . Commenced writing a Siamese tract designed to give a full account of the natural and moral attributes of Jehovah. **I** feel that it is the time to expose to the eyes of the people the horrors of idolatry, and charge home the conviction of sin and guilt upon them by all possible and laudable means. (Feltus 1936:45)

September 24. 1837. . . . Lectured my people on the falsity of their religion and the many ways in which they sin against Jehovah. A good degree of seriousness manifested. The people stare when **I** tell them

plainly the rottenness of their religious system, but they seem to say that what I say is probably but too true. (Feltus 1936:46)

In **1851**, Bradley continued to speak boldly against the **sin** of Buddhism and wickedness in activities of **Buddhists' religious lives** afraid of any authority in Siam; he wanted Buddhists to know that what they were doing was sinful in God's sight. He wrote:

February 22. 1851. . . . I spoke out boldly against the folly and sin of Buddhism and the uselessness and wickedness of making idol temples and becoming priests of Buddha. One man begged me from speaking against making temples lest it should come to the King's ears and he should be angry. I told him that I must speak out and was not at all afraid of his Majesty against me for it. (Feltus **1936:135**)

Using **Komin's** criteria noted in Chapter 2 to evaluate Bradley's ministry, I observe that Bradley violated: **(1)** ego orientation and identity of the Thai because his attitude toward Buddhism was negative (Komin 1991:133), **(2)** grateful and smooth relationship **orientation** because Bradley evangelized without building up relationships (Komin **1991:139-143**), **(3)** religio-psychical orientation because Bradley presented Christianity as an **"other-worldly"** doctrine while the Thai held a **"this-worldly"** doctrine (Komin 1991:171).

Bradley decided by himself to give up the method he had used for years for propagating the gospel. He estimated that he used this method of sitting and talking and giving tracts **1200** times during **15** years (Feltus **1936:133**). He estimated that in this way the word of God spread through all the kingdom. How much or how little it did to prepare the way of the Lord in Thailand it is impossible to say (Feltus 1936:133). Bradley recorded his change to a new mode as follows:

January 2, 1851. . . I give up this mode of procedure to try the **colporteur** [distribute religious tracts and books] system of preaching from house to house as it seems to be the impression of nearly all missionaries now in the field that it is wise for me to make this change. (Feltus 1936:133)

**However, Bradley's** preaching reflected the same atmosphere as his tract **distribution.** Whereas his preaching should have focused on Christ and lifted him up, on the contrary, he pointed out to his hearers that their Buddha was in hell. He wrote on June 2, **1852:**

Then I talked about three-fourths of an hour until I was weary.  
Then I gave him and others a few portions of the gospel and other tracts.  
In the course of my talks to conclude that Buddha was in hell. (Feltus 1936:170)

Sometimes Bradley did not hesitate to walk directly into a shop where idols were being made and preach against the business. Thai Buddhists responded to his actions as recorded in Bradley's diary:

November 8, 1851. . . On Friday I stepped into a shop in the great Bazaar where little idols were being made. I began to preach against the business. Presently, the chief manufacturer invited me to sit down and go into the subject thoroughly. The people gathered in and about the door until I had **15-20** hearers. What I said seemed to commend itself to their consciences. I trust that it is now well settled and the Lord will bless us. (Feltus 1936:145)

This incident demonstrates the response of the chief manufacturer and how Bradley witnessed to the chief manufacturer. Why did the chief manufacturer not react negatively to Bradley when his identity and business were disturbed by Bradley's preaching? Why did Bradley choose to present the gospel in this manner? These two questions will be discussed in the summary.

Bradley preached thus for two years after the above incident. Then one day he cried:

December 10, 1853. . . But oh my leanness, my leanness in the missionary work. I am almost horrified with the thought of it. When

shall I become a fruitful missionary. When shall I win some poor heathen for Christ. Oh that I might have some such joy. (Feltus 1936:166)

Bradley was always a good missionary. His lifestyle impressed ~~the Thai~~ as long as he did not speak about Buddhism. Prince Chao Fa Noi introduced Bradley thus: **"Here** is Dr. Bradley; a man who drinks no ardent spirits or wine nor does he smoke tobacco, he is an honest man" (Feltus 1936:66). Bradley had been admired not only by the prince but also by common people, who were greatly impressed with him as a man who had never shown anger even once to the Thai. Donald **C.** Lord wrote Mo Bradley and Thailand (1969). In this biography, he noted the comment of a Thai noble on Bradley's character: **"There** must be something in your religion different from ours to create such a man, one who never showed anger no matter how badly he was abused by the **Thai"** (Lord 1969:207).

There seems to be, then, a relationship between Bradley's attitude toward Buddhism and his success in leading the Thai to Christ. Using criteria of Thai meekness to measure the Christian witness of Bradley, one can conclude that his actions worked negatively against the meekness approach (Komin 1991:133-171). What is the source of his attitude?

The attitude toward Thai culture and Buddhism needs to be observed closely in Bradley's ministry. After serving the Lord in Siam for eleven years Bradley decided to study Thai culture, but unfortunately he felt he wasted time in doing so. He wrote:

April 11, 1846. . . I have set myself to an accurate study of the history, laws, manners, and customs of the Siamese. I feel exceedingly loose as

respects **all** my present knowledge of these subjects. It seems to me to be a duty I owe **God**, my Master, to myself as a missionary and to the churches who sustain me in my work to qualify myself more thoroughly in **this respect**. (Feltus 1936:103)

After ending his study of Thai culture and customs, Bradley could not find ways of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Thai. The intensity of friction in cross-cultural communication which Bradley and the Thai encountered is revealed in the following incidents.

August 31, 1851. . . Sabbath. In the **morning** preached to a company of Siamese on a bridge over a canal not far from my house. The bridge had over ft a good cover and upon **it** comfortable seats. While preaching, boat loads of priests came along in the canal and wished me to move off from the bridge so that they might pass under without contracting sin. I kept my seat and told them that I did not believe in such a foolishness. They replied, "Then we cannot **pass**." "**Well**," said I, "**be** it so, I shall not humor such a notion as **that**." Presently they put their paddles in the water with unusual force and sprung through with all their might. (Feltus 1936:142)

It should be noted here that in a hierarchical culture like that of the Thai, people should not sit or stand above the priests and the king or the persons close to self, such as father or mother or older people. It is a great cultural sin to be above the monks and an unpardonable sin to be above the king. The other incident is **concerned** with the disobedience of the custom of Siam in paying respect to the king. Bradley wrote in his diary on November **11, 1836**, as follows:

Have for the first time had a distinct view of the King of Siam as he was **carried** from the river to the Phra Klang's Wat (temple). He is very corpulent, light of complexion for a Siamese and very well favored. Officers were stationed all about the neighborhood to see that all who venture to look up at the king as he was so exposed should skulk behind some hiding place or fall down on their hands and knees. One of these officers were perplexed by my conduct. He saw me sitting erect in **Mr.** Hunter's dining room looking at his Majesty through a window. He came

up to me with his long rod and insisted that I should bow down on the floor. I implied that it was not my custom to bow down to men and that I would not do it. The Petty Officer brandished his rod and blustered about a great rate but with no success until the King passed **out of sight, then** he went off. (Feltus 1936:46)

The above incident, **concerned** as it was with Bradley's response to Thai culture related to the king, created tension and friction among the people. Any action that causes people anger brings low efficiency outcomes in **cross-cultural** communication (Dodd 1995:6).

The incident below reflects both perception and confusion on the part of the Bradleys between Christianizing and denationalizing in regard to a Thai lady who decided to be a Christian:

January 27, 1858. . . **Muan**, the young woman serving as a waiting maid in my family has for several months indulged a lively hope in Christ and now is quite anxious to join the Church of Christ and be a Christian. She appears remarkably well and seems willing to take up her cross that we think the Lord would have her take up. Mrs. Bradley expressed to her a desire that she would change a style of her dress from that which the Siamese females are accustomed to wear, as that is very indelicate and improper for a Christian woman. The change would make her appear very singular and odd among her own people and would no doubt bring down upon her, often times, derision and ridicule. She thought so herself but she decidedly proposed to have the change made and actually began today to practice accordingly, to the heartfelt pleasure of all my family and boarders. She does indeed appear to be a hearty believer in Christ and wishes to please Him in every particular. She seems to have an impression that she may die soon and she has told Mrs. Bradley that she wishes to have a Christian burial and not to have her body **burned**. (Feltus 1936:196)

Regarding the three incidents, certain brief conclusions may be drawn. A violation of Thai culture by missionaries relates to a lack of a deep knowledge of the Siamese culture. Bradley's violation of Thai culture began when he

decided not to pay serious attention to studying Thai culture, and it caused anger in the lives of many candidates for the Kingdom of God.

Muan, a Thai lady, became *farang* (foreigner) in her manner of dress. This caused her own family and social networks to misunderstand what being a Christian meant. They would certainly have thought that to be a Christian, one must leave the Thai way of living and become **westernized**. **Bradley's** action worked negatively against the meekness approach.

After Bradley changed his mode of presenting the gospel from giving tracts to preaching, he preached to Siamese without developing a relationship with them. He spent anywhere between fifteen minutes to thirty minutes on each presentation of the gospel. The two incidents below portray the success and failure in Christian witness in relation to the time spent.

September 6. 1867. . . I went out to ask the Lord to direct my steps, not knowing where I should stop to perform any wayside preaching. Having reached the Court of Temple Chaeng I found quite a number of priests and laymen assembled, some doing **government** work and some engaged in idle talk. I sat down on a log among them while they huddled around me as if anxious to hear what I had to say to them about Jesus and his religion. I read from my tract the Miracles of Jesus. But ere I had read fifteen minutes my audience had nearly left me as if I had nothing interesting to relate to them, and yet I have positive evidence that they understood sufficiently well for what I said and read to have made a deep impression on their minds. Seeing myself almost alone I went away groaning in spirit. (Feltus 1936:278)

Bradley kept on preaching faithfully until the end of his ministry. On June 2, **1872, only** one year before he died, he went out and preached again to unknown audiences:

June 2. 1872. . . Preached in the court of Royal palace. Spoke **15** minutes in the Royal Court House itself to a number of Siamese and gave them a few small tracts. (Feltus **1936:301**)

Sometimes **Bradley** spent time confronting, challenging, and **arguing**.

He held several arguments with Buddhists within the palace (Feltus 1936:92).

He challenged the Siamese on **every** occasion. For example, he wrote:

July 5, 1872. . . . **Went on** the S.S. **Bangkok** and **met** there the Regent, minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of War and many others of the officials deeply engaged in buying shoes for themselves, wives and children. His Grace the Regent asked me if I thought well of the changes they were making in costume and so on. I replied yes, but I added that they should not be content with this improvement but go on and overthrow idolatry. (Feltus 1936:302)

Here it is possible to conclude that Bradley believed the Siamese would believe in the gospel if they heard its contents. He went out to preach, assuming that by hearing the gospel the Siamese would be able to understand exactly as he understood. Unfortunately, he did not develop a relationship with the people to whom he preached so that he could dialogue with them for a clear understanding of the gospel. Rather, he chose to impart the understanding of the gospel by challenging, by arguing. He did not understand why the Siamese required a longer time to understand the gospel. His arguing only seemed to push people further from him. He failed to realize that allowing a longer time and developing a genuine relationship through dialogue would have produced better results. Bradley's ministry worked negatively against the meek approach (Komin 1991:139-143).

On the contrary, Luang Petch Songkram, a Siamese Christian man, and Nang Buo Lai, a Siamese Christian lady, demonstrated indigenous **ways of** Christian witness which need to be compared with the **Western** way here.

4. The **Christian** Witness of Siamese Christians: Luang Petch **Songkram** and Nang Buo Lai

Luang Petch Songkram was a name given by the king to a man whose real name was Nai **Boon-Nart** Chi-Sawn. He was a **Buddhist**, an educated person well versed in the arts, poetry, and prose. His mind had been shaped by the truth in Buddhism, and he sought always the Truth which he believed must be the greatest thing in the world.

The **prevenient** grace of God was manifested to him, for he came to construct from his own reason that there must be a Creator-God since the universe he saw could not come into being on its own. This kind of mind was ready to absorb the teaching of Christianity. One day he received a Bible from the Rev. John Carrington, D.D. He read and dared to believe this God by himself in **Trang**, a **Southern** province of Thailand. There he lived and witnessed in his own individual way.

After Luang Petch Songkram received water baptism from the Rev. E.P. Dunlap in Trang, he then erected a red flag in front of his house, saying the **sign** was for a testimony that here lived a Christian (**McFarland 1928:277**).

He did not witness to strangers or preach or give tracts on the street like some missionaries, but he called his relatives and friends and about thirty others, who were also baptized. He performed his Christian witness unconsciously along the web of his social networks and knew that the gospel must go first to his own relatives and friends. Group conversion resulted.

Luang Petch **Songkram's** ministry worked ~~positively~~ toward the meek approach (Komin 1991:190).

It is not known how this wise but ~~not~~ <sup>well</sup> ~~educated~~ Christian woman, Nang Buo Lai, came to know Christ, but she ~~went~~ <sup>came</sup> from house to house teaching the Bible to new converts and their ~~household~~ <sup>family</sup> urging them to read the Bible and pray. **She** did not **go** to strangers but ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> along the circuit of social relationships in a village. A woman of real ~~divinity~~ <sup>divinity</sup>, she commanded the respect and won the love of her pupils. She was a ~~woman~~ <sup>woman</sup> of deep spiritual life, and some excellent leaders were first her pupils; ~~Ming~~ <sup>Ming</sup> Boa Koa and Nang **Thom** Kao, a daughter and a grand daughter of ~~Nang~~ <sup>Nang</sup> Buo Lai respectively. On being asked how Nang **Thom** Kao conducted ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~class~~ <sup>class</sup>, a member of the class replied, "**Just** like my mother and ~~grandmother~~ <sup>grandmother</sup> (McFarland 1928:277-278). That is, she used **time-honored** and **familiar** ~~ways~~ <sup>ways</sup>.

Observation of the Christian witness of ~~Siamese~~ <sup>Siamese</sup> Christians above leads to the conclusion that any ~~Christian~~ <sup>Christian</sup> witness performed along social networks using indigenous strategies ~~produces~~ <sup>produces</sup> good fruit. Credibility of communicators of the gospel depends upon ~~whether~~ <sup>whether</sup> they are insiders or outsiders of the social **networks**. Nang Budo ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> Luang Pet **Songkram** were insiders while Bradley was an outsider. As ~~insiders~~ <sup>insiders</sup>, they automatically overcame various hindrances which ~~missionary~~ <sup>missionary</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> in cross-cultural communication. They witnessed positively ~~using~~ <sup>using</sup> for a meek approach (Komin 1991:190).

A study of Christian witness in modern Roman Catholic missions will confirm conclusions drawn from the study among Protestants.

### Modern Roman Catholic Missions in Thailand (1688-1980)

Following the Phaulkon revolution in 1688, the Catholics made few inroads among the Siamese population (Smith 1980:36). The work of the missionaries did not grow strong apparently due to natural resentment for their past interference in customs and politics (Gustafson 1970:147). From the end of King Narai's reign until the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767, the church was very weak due to political circumstances, and Siam had almost no contacts with the **western** powers (Chaiwan 1984:64). From 1780 to **1830, Westerners** were banished from Thailand (Fowler 1955:26). In 1785, the Roman Catholic Church in Siam totaled 1,372 only, being comprised of 413 Siamese of Portuguese origin, 379 Cambodians of Portuguese origin, and 589 **Annamites** (Smith 1980:36).

During the nineteenth century, Catholic missions grew slowly. By **1982**, the 181,000 adults and children of the Catholic church comprised about 70 percent of Christianity in Thailand (Chaiwan 1984:65). By 1982, Thailand's first cardinal was appointed. Although for centuries the progress of the church had been slow, the last half century saw an accelerated pace in church growth. Church members increase 3 percent in five years (1984:65).

Saad Chaiwan, a Thai scholar, did research in 1984 that shows that only 2.1 percent or 6 out of 285 Catholic priests realized the significance of evangelism, and even then it was third on their priority list. That may be one of

many reasons why the Catholic Church grows slowly. Nevertheless, Catholics regard the permeation of society with Christian values as the most important aspect, as is indicated in an evaluation of the objectives of the Catholic church in Thailand in 1978 when Chaiwan conducted his research work among Catholic priests (Chaiwan 1984:67).

If modern Roman Catholics have not been interested in evangelism, why has the church grown? To understand the method used in the Catholic church, one should study the apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi of **1975** reprinted in New Direction in Mission and Evangelization. (Volume 1) (Scherer and Bevans **1992**). Pope Paul VI suggested a new meaning for evangelization: Evangelization involves the evangelization of cultures, by which he means a creative encounter between the gospel and cultures (Scherer and Bevans 1994:122). The process is made up of varied elements; the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, and apostolic initiative (Scherer and Bevans 1992:22). The document reaffirms the Christian's right to proclaim the gospel and to seek the conversion of others as long as it is not forced upon the unbeliever (Scherer and Bevans 1992:23).

The Catholic Church has a good attitude toward Buddhism, having studied Thai culture well. Roman Catholics reject nothing that is true and holy in Buddhism. They use dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to Christian faith and life. They recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and

moral, as well as the **sociocultural** values found among these people (Chaiwan 1984:64).

In actual witnessing, the Roman Catholics use **absorption**. Specifically, the Roman Catholics decided to move closer to Buddhism, embracing the best parts in Buddhism and accepting that Buddhists are good. It is as if a shock absorber were placed at a designated contact point of each religion, preparing them to connect with each other smoothly.

**Journalist Zak Lantern**, in his article on May 25, 1986, in The Bangkok Post titled "Missionaries: Why They Have Failed So **Miserably**" (1986), mentioned the idea of absorption used by Roman Catholics in Thailand. He mentioned that since Vatican Council II the Catholics have changed their policy on Christian witness from "**attacking**" to being "**friendly**" and reviving the "**absorption**" tactics the Hindus used 1,500 years ago. The Hindus developed a theory that Buddha was an **incarnation** of the Hindu God Vishnu (**Lantern 1991:13**). They said that Buddha is not outside the Hindu circle. He belongs to Hinduism. He is an **incarnation** of our God (**Lantern 1991:13**).

Theologically speaking, Roman Catholics in Thailand have formed a theory that Buddha was also sent by God and that Buddha and his teaching offer some traces of truth, but not all. According to the Catholics, Buddha may be regarded as one who came to prepare the way of Jesus Christ, the son of God (**Lantern 1991:13**).

Actual witnessing by using absorption in Christian witness among the Catholics in Thailand can be demonstrated by a situation in Ban Song Yae

village in **Yasothon** Province. **Artha Nanthachakra**, a lecturer on Mahasarakham University's faculty of Human and Social Science, studied the phenomenon of Buddhists who lived in Ban Song Yae village and who converted to Catholicism. Ban Song Yae village is one of many Catholic communities scattered throughout the **northern** region as a result of the work of French missionaries in the eighteenth century. The history of the region sheds some light on the matter, explained Artha. In the old days Catholic priests forbade Thai Catholics from having contact with Buddhists (**Trakullertsathein** 1996:1). However, the policy changed some decades ago. In the case of Ban Song Yae, Buddhists and Catholics lived **together**, and inside many homes, one sees the curious scene of a statue of the Virgin Mary standing close to an image of the Buddha.

According to Thonglor **Khamkhom**, the Catholic village headman, about **1700** Catholics and 750 Buddhists live in the area. The numbers fluctuate depending on converts, he said (**Trakullertsathein** 1996:1).

"In our village, everybody has freedom to follow any religion. In some families, parents and children hold different **faiths**, but they can live together," said the headman. There is only one restriction; a Buddhist must become a Catholic to marry a Catholic, according to the rules of the Catholic church. Inter-marriage between Buddhists and Catholics is the main reason the two groups have developed a strong relationship. While some may say this shows that Catholicism dominates Buddhism, Artha sees it as an example of flexibility

and **compromise** between the two groups. This compromise occurs in the area of religious and cultural festivals and rituals and in intermarriage.

In an interview, **Ubolwan** Mejudhon, a D.Miss. student at **Asbury Theological Seminary**, explained how she lived and absorbed the Christian witness of her Catholic friend for three years **(1963-1966)**. She mentioned that she was accepted into the Catholic family first. She lived with them and was accepted as one of their members. No one forced her to follow any religious practices; they simply showed her their Christian lifestyle. Some of them were able to share and explain why they believed in God. Ubolwan went with them to worship services at a church in the village from time to time. They even expected Ubolwan to marry one of their family members.

From these examples a summary can be made of the Christian witness of Catholics in Thailand. The Christian witness by absorption did not bring about devout, genuine Christians. The Catholic attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture is positive, and Catholics are willing to spend time with Buddhists, but they do not share the gospel of Jesus Christ. They do not expect genuine conversion. Their actions work neither positively nor negatively in terms of the meek approach. Absorption took them in a direction opposite to the intention of this dissertation. Christian witness of the Roman Catholic Church in Ban Song Yae has not used the gospel of Jesus Christ. Conversions appear not to have been genuine and biblical because Christian believers in Ban Song Yae practice dualism and syncretism in their religious lives in the community.

### Modern Protestant Missions in Thailand (1910-1980)

Two major Protestant groups are in Thailand: (1) the ecumenical **group--** the Church of Christ in Thailand (C.C.T.), and (2) the evangelical groups-- including the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (**E.F.T.**), **Southern** Baptist, and Seventh Day Adventist missions. There are at least **1000** missionaries and 60 Christians **organizations** in **E.F.T.** A major difference between the **ecumenicals** and the evangelicals is their theology of mission. The majority of the ecumenical churches proclaim the gospel through their lifestyles and charitable works more than through preaching the gospel to Buddhists and asking for repentance. They exhibit a positive attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture. The majority of the evangelical churches proclaim the gospel primarily through **proclamation--** preaching and witnessing by words. The incident below illustrates how the Protestant communities witness to a Thai Buddhist.

A brief but poignant autobiography tells of Miss **Prajuab Tirabutana**, a Thai **girl**, who came in contact with an American missionary woman who taught her English and witnessed to her about Christ in her home town in **northern** Thailand. The story was published in Practical Anthropology in **1959**, and may represent the majority of Christian witness done in Thailand. Miss Tirabutana, bom in a provincial town of **northern** Thailand, has not been abroad, but lived her life among her own people. Her desire to study English led her to an

v

American Christian pastor's wife, who was able to teach her the English language. Miss Tirabutana writes, "**My** teacher could talk Thai so she talked Thai to me all the time. And the book that she used to teach me was the Bible.

She kept talking just about God and Jesus and the miracles that Jesus **did**" (Tirabutana 1959:227).

But Tirabutana did not see that the miracles of Jesus were any better than the miracles of the spirits she had read about since she was a child, or those spirits in which some villagers believed (Tirabutana 1959:227). After the teacher told her of Jesus and God and tried hard to persuade her to become a Christian (to which Tirabutana listened with disinterest), she threw out her last card: "**All** the people who do not believe in God and Jesus the Redeemer will be sent to the deep hot **hell**" (Tirabutana 1959:227). When she came home and reported to her father, his eyes widened in great surprise and he said, "**Why**, I thought the white people were clever. Who can help you out of hell if you do just bad things? And who can draw you to hell if you do just good and proper **things**?" (Tirabutana 1959:228). Her father asked her to go back to see her teacher again and ask her teacher what Jesus told people to do. She went, and then reported that her teacher asked her to follow the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount in the Bible. She explained to her father the content of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. In **turn**, her father repeated the teachings of Buddha, many of which are the same as her teacher mentioned. Her father added:

It is natural for you to be confused and doubtful, the belief that you do not approve it by yourself should not be in your mind. When you have taught carefully and are sure yourself that this preaching is good, this preaching has no bad effect on the one who does it, if you do it, noble people will admire you, if you do it completely it will be good, it will be happiness for **yourselves** and for other people. There, then you should believe it. (Tirabutana 1959:279)

The teacher persuaded her to go to church every Sunday. She could not remember how long she studied the Bible with her teacher. She just remembered that her patience came to an end one day, **and** then she left.

Miss Prajuab Tirabutana got a new job in a **Christian** hospital in Bangkok and had a chance to study English with the new **doctor's** wife three times a week. She wrote her experiences in her diary:

She talked a lot more than our former teacher, which was good for me too that **I** could practice listening to English. After my ears were completely flooded by her talk a year later I stopped **learning**. (Tirabutana 1959:279)

Tirabutana described her situation in Bangkok and her experiences in the church:

Because **I** worked with the mission, they said they did not force anybody, but kept asking, inviting, and persuading me to go to the church, and I did not want to be antisocial, so it was necessary for me to go to their **church**. (Tirabutana 1959:279)

She said the preachers at the church there were a little wiser than those in other missions because they were more educated, but they were still stupid enough to raise themselves by stepping on other people's hands (Tirabutana 1959:279). She recorded what she heard from the pastors at the church:

They blamed, and were sarcastic about other religions, without really knowing those religions and then praised themselves highly, **I** was bored to death. And one day the head of their preachers preached to us how silly my religion was. (Tirabutana 1959:279)

She tried to read the Bible, too, but she said she could not understand because no one cared enough to sit down with her and explain the meanings to her. She wrote thus of her experience in reading the Bible: **"But** both of the Thai Bibles were translated word for word which must require special patience

to read and understand it. And I had not much of that **patience.**" (Tirabutana 1959:280)

The Christian community around her did not help her to come closer to Christ. Their lifestyles which she observed for a long period of time were not above those of her own Buddhist friends. She explained:

Some of the members of their church were, as I had noticed and heard from the gossip between themselves and other people who knew them **before**, misfits from general society. I mean they had done something that people thought was bad or wicked to do. Our town is small so almost everybody knows each other and what they have done, so the people did not accept them. (Tirabutana 1959:280)

At the end of her story, she pleads for missionaries to help improve their Christian witness in Thailand. She concludes as follows:

I appreciate the **western** people coming to our country. We **learned** many good and useful things from them. But I wish with my whole heart I would like them to **learn**, to understand us, too. And the way to do it is to communicate with as many people as possible or to read our books, and I can assure them that they will find many interesting things in us. And that way they will understand us and will not look down on us as most of them are doing now. (Tirabutana 1959:280)

It can be concluded that these experiences of Miss Prajuab Tirabutana with her English teachers, with Christian witness through the preaching of the pastors, and with Christian communities seemed to work negatively against the meek approach. The teacher did not allow a relationship with her student to grow (Komin 1991:143). A long-term, sincere, genuine relationship with no strings attached was not developed with Tirabutana (Komin 1991:144). Christian communities and the message she heard from the pastors did not draw her to Christ. Preachers' attitudes toward Buddhism were negative, and the lifestyles of Christian communities lacked power to convince

her to study **Christianity** in a serious way (Komin 1991:133). Everything she mentioned about Christianity was boring rather than *sanuke* (*fun* and enjoyable) (Fieg 1989:58). The credibility of the gospel communicators (her teachers) was promising, but the credibility of the church seemed to be poor. The teachers did not allow much time for dialogue in their Christian witness (LCWE 1980:9). The gospel challenged Tirabutana, and she kept seeking Christian companionship because she expected to get benefits and help from her teachers (LCWE 1980:5). However, she had no desire to be converted.

### Analysis of Christian Witness in Thailand

Christian witness by missionaries and Thai Christians in two periods of Christian missions in Thailand can be analyzed by using the criteria outlined in Chapter 2. The criteria in Chapter 2 will help us **discern** whether the demonstration of witnessing by missionaries and Thai Christians worked toward or against the meek approach.

First, the early ministry of the Roman Catholic priests consisted of both aggression and meekness. The priests came to Siam by developing their relationships to King Narai and the Siamese **government**. They helped the **government** in education, construction, politics, science and technology; that is, in **Siam's** areas of need. When the king received benefits and help from them, he showed his grateful relationship by moving closer to Christianity. He demonstrated receptivity by **allowing** Thai boys to study with the missionaries in the mission compound, asking his nobles to attend the chapel, accepting the picture of Christ, promising the priests that he would not become a Muslim but

would choose **Christianity**. The situation seemed promising, for everything went well at first and would have continued so if the priests had followed the same pace.

The planned encounter used by Phaulkon by which he intended to accelerate the process of conversion of the king resulted in failure. The explicit intention of Phaulkon was interpreted by the Siamese officials in a negative way. They thought the good the Catholic priests had done so far was intended to destroy Siam implicitly by **turning** Siam into a Catholic nation. This confusion occurring in the **government** level brought about the collapse of the French Catholic ministry.

The first part of the **Catholic effort** worked positively toward the meek approach, but the last part worked negatively. **It** should be noted here that hidden agendas and manipulative attitudes should not be part of relationships with Buddhists. These elements can destroy all the good things done by Christians and can be interpreted in the other direction.

Second, Christian witness by the Rev. and Mrs. Jesse Caswell, Or. and Mrs. Samuel House, the Rev. Stephen Mattoon, Luang Pet Songkram, and Nang Buo Lai worked positively for the meek **approach**, while **Bradley's** methods of distributing tracts and preaching worked against the meek approach. Bradley's lifestyle impressed many Siamese. Many Siamese admired Bradley's lifestyle and this kind of lifestyle works positively toward the meek approach.

It should be observed here that using right roles, taking a longer time in Christian witness, developing a genuine relationship, **turning oneself** into an insider, and witnessing along the social networks bring good results. The **Mattoons** and the Houses became insiders by embracing two Siamese **children** in their own **families**. Luang Pet Songkram and Nang Buo Lai witnessed along their social networks and as insiders demonstrated excellent results. A relationship that does not violate the ego self of the Thai seems to lead to a successful Christian witness. Thai identity should not be violated while one is demonstrating meekness. Missionaries and Thai Christians must study Buddhism and Thai culture seriously. A relationship that renders *Bunkhun* (goodness, help, and favors) to the receptors of the gospel without violation of their identity is able to lead them closer to Christ. The roles of parents, teachers, and doctors can be used to demonstrate *Bunkhun* .

The lifestyles of Christians such as Bradley and Caswell succeeded with the King and Siamese nobles. The parental love and sympathetic attitudes of the Houses and the Mattoons deeply impressed Nang Esther and Nai Naa. The kind and sincere help of Caswell caused King Mongkut to be grateful to him and his wife, the communities of missionaries as a whole, and even the United States of America. The present religious freedom Christians enjoy now derives from the goodness of Caswell and many missionaries in the past.

Giving tracts and preaching the gospel at the first encounter with Buddhists can be done, but history seems to show that it produces no fruit. This does not mean that the gospel has no power but rather that the receptors of the

gospel do not understand the meaning of the gospel message. Their minds are loaded with Buddhist concepts. It took Bradley fifteen years to realize that fact. The workable method Bradley observed in Burma did not necessarily work in **Siam**. The implication is that good methods may not be successful or transfer to other places. Faithful Siamese Christians need to work closely with missionaries and **contextualize** Christian witness. Without these **persons**, missionaries may not know Thai culture well enough to demonstrate their Christian witness. **Learning** from Thai Christians is strongly **recommended**, and they are always available to help missionaries in this matter **if** missionaries ask for help from them in a meek way.

Attacking Buddhism and Thai culture brought about anger which generally closed the channel for cross-cultural communication. Missionaries must **learn** to appreciate the good parts of Buddhism and Thai culture, studying them seriously. **Western** missionaries serve as channels to demonstrate **Western** culture as well as biblical meekness, but ethnocentrism should not be in missionaries' lives. Preaching the gospel after dialoguing about similarities between Buddhism and Christianity is helpful in introducing the gospel to Buddhists. The *Kata and Tesa* concepts-speaking right and proper things at the right time and in the right place to the right **person--were** neglected by Bradley's **ministry**, but are highly recommended for the Christian witness in Thailand. Explanation of the gospel should come through use of indigenous media, stories, parables, and methods.

Third, Roman Catholic priests did not realize the significance of proclamation of the gospel by words. They regarded the permeation of society with Christian values as the most important aspect (Chaiwan 1984:67).

Documents such as Evangelii Nuntiandi reaffirm the **Christian's** right to proclaim the gospel and to seek the conversion of others as long as these are not forced upon unbelievers (Scherer and Bevans 1992:23). The Christian village of Ban Song Yae used absorption and biological growth to enlarge the Catholic churches in the village. The Catholic Church in Thailand has always maintained a positive attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture. Their method seems to be to introduce change by the permeation of society with Christian values. The absorption method as used in Ban Song Yae village demonstrates the **Catholics'** method in propagating Christianity in Thailand. The idea of proclaiming the words of the gospel and calling Buddhists to repentance of their sins and to be born again in the spirit is not explicitly carried out. The Catholics' method of conversion as it appears in Ban Song Yae village is not in harmony with the conversion aims of this dissertation. The Catholics' actions worked positively toward the meekness approach in creating an atmosphere for Christian witness. Unfortunately, they did not give the gospel to the receptors. In actual witnessing, they used absorption method. This strategy worked negatively against the meek approach because Buddhists who hold high religion perceive that the Catholic Church in Thailand threatened the Thai by using hidden agendas. Buddhists think that the Catholic mission in Thailand tries to swallow the whole **country**, quietly making it a Catholic country. The

Thai perceive a meek approach used by the Roman Catholics as an aggressive method because Catholic strategies can be interpreted by the Thai as full of hidden agendas.

Fourth, the Protestant missions in Thailand show that teaching English as a second language can be a good tool for missionaries and Thai churches in leading Buddhists to form relationships with Christians prior to their coming to know Christ. Presently, many churches are using this method because it **fits** their needs. Many good secular schools are open to serve this need. If the Thai do not like the way Christians teach, they can go to the secular schools. The role of missionaries and Thai Christians as teachers fits Thai culture well. Usually, however, the weakness lies in failing to develop relationships with the Thai. Rapport is not developed. Missionaries and Thai Christians share the gospel with them too soon. They are not interested in Christianity. Students feel threatened and doubtful of the role of the teachers, whether they are missionaries or English teachers. However, some do come to know Christ by this method. If teachers develop a sincere, **long-term**, parental relationship with Thai students and care for them in various areas of their lives, they will gain more fruit. The miracles of Jesus and the **"hell"** concept used by **Tirabutana's** teachers do not impress many Thai Christians. Lack of credibility of the church and the teachers' lack of power to draw Tirabutana to Christ are weaknesses. The communication of the gospel which violates the identity of receptors will not **bring any results**. Tirabutana said little because she wanted the relationship to be as smooth as possible while she received benefits from her teachers. She

used the word **"bored to death"** or *Bua*, which implied that the preaching of the word was not **interesting**, that it was unrelated and communicated little to **her**. She developed *Jai Yen* (**cool-hearted**) while her teachers developed *Jai Roon* (hot-hearted). \_\_\_\_\_

This example shows that Christians and missionaries who do not study Thai culture and Buddhism will be frustrated in their Christian witness. Her plea to missionaries and Thai churches needs to be considered seriously. Missionaries and Thai Christians should ask of Buddhists to whom they are witnessing: **"Please** tell me, what is the best way to bring the Thai to **Christ?"** They will hear **a** number of answers from Buddhists that can benefit their ministry greatly.

### Conclusion

The demonstration of witnessing by missionaries and Thai Christians in two periods of Christian missions in Thailand provides a number of lessons for Christian witness as follows.

First, the relationship between gospel communicators and receptors of the gospel is one of the major factors in Christian witness in Thailand. The relationship started and carried on smoothly as long as the Catholic priests and missionaries genuinely and sincerely contributed what they had to fit the needs of the Thai, with no strings attached. The Thai in response would demonstrate a grateful relationship toward missionaries by providing what missionaries needed or asked for. Relationship between the two parties grew. The **Thai king** and the Siamese would move toward Christ by their own initiatives. The

process went on well as **long** as both parties did not violate the cultural and religious values of reciprocity and harmony. The activities of the missionary grew quickly and the Siamese moved toward Christ by themselves. Much evidence supports this fact. The Catholic priests helped the Siamese **government** in education, construction, science and technology in areas of their need. The Siamese allowed Thai boys to study with missionaries, the king's nobles attended the chapel, and the king himself accepted the picture of Christ. This implies that the king developed a smooth relationship and showed his respect and positive attitudes toward Christianity. For the Protestant missions, Caswell taught the prince-priest for three years. The prince-priest provided a place and opportunities to preach the gospel as Caswell requested. When the Mattoons and the Houses adopted Nai Naa and Nang Esther into their families, both of them gave their lives back to serve Christ and the missionaries for the rest of their lives. When House supported Boon It to study in the United States for seventeen years, Boon It, in **turn**, demonstrated gratitude to God and to the missionaries by serving the Lord in Siam until he died, refusing an offer to be a **governor** from the Siamese **government**.

In contrast, the relationship was disturbed and broken when the Thai perceived that the Catholic priests and missionaries had a hidden agenda and were not sincere. This can be seen in the case of Phaulkon during the early Roman Catholic missions. The relationship broke when Protestant missionaries violated the identity of the Thai. Bradley blamed Buddhism and **Tirabutana's** pastor was sarcastic about Buddhism. Modern Roman Catholic

missions threatened Buddhists in Ban Song Yae by using absorption and allowing dualistic religious systems. It should be noted that a good relationship with **non-Christians** is directly related to a selected appropriate role and status for gospel communicators and their strategies in Christian witness. In this sense, family focused evangelism is far more effective.

Second, missionary attitudes toward Buddhism was another factor in **Christian** witness in Thailand. Catholic priests in the early period were asked by King Narai to compare Buddhism with Christianity. The priests were clever. They shared only the goodness of Christ without condemning Buddhism; consequently, their ministries continued. Bradley, however, abused **Buddhism** as his first step to extolling Christianity and saw no fruit in his ministry. Tirabutana's teachers and pastors failed to win her to Christ because they always blamed Buddhism. In contrast, those missionaries who treated Buddhists with love and did not criticize Buddhism, had ministries that went smoothly.

Third, missionary attitudes toward Thai culture was another area which could determine the success or failure of Christian witness in Thailand. Phaulkon threatened the identity of Siamese officials by accelerating his ministry to convert King Narai. Bradley was confrontational with Buddhists in his ministry. Tirabutana's teachers threatened their student and used a manipulative strategy to win souls, which created negative attitudes in Tirabutana. Caswell chose the role of teacher. He taught the **prince-priest** and served the needs of the monks. House and Mattoon chose the role of parents to

Nai Naa and Nang Esther. Luang Petch **Songkram** and Nang Buo Lai started their witnessing along the grain of Thai social networks and they saw great fruit.

Fourth, the Catholic priests and Protestant missionaries who presented the gospel with benefits and help, not challenge and threat, saw greater fruit. This factor created a closer relationship to Buddhists as well. The charitable works of Bradley, Caswell, Mattoon, and Tirabutana's teachers were good examples. Missionaries' strategies succeeded as long as Buddhists were not threatened. Buddhists reacted negatively when they perceived that missionaries used their charitable works as means to convert them. Buddhists interpreted this to mean that missionaries were not sincere and had hidden agendas to deal with them. The Thai did not understand the gospel clearly because missionaries and Thai Christians used **Western** ways in sharing the gospel. The Roman Catholic priests who used absorption and did not share the gospel of Christ generated confusion and a sense of threat among the Buddhists. Bradley and Tirabutana's teachers presented the gospel straightforwardly without asking how much Buddhists understood. They took for granted that Buddhists would understand the concepts of **God**, sin, heaven, and hell as they understood them.

Fifth, the time factor played an important role in Christian witness. Missionaries who were sincere and performed their ministries consistently would see greater fruit. Sincerity and consistency for a longer period of time brought **good results**. Bradley was very sincere, but he spent only twenty minutes in sharing the gospel. He saw no response. Phaulkon spent long

years in serving the **Thai**, but was perceived as insincere by them. He also saw no fruit. The Houses and the Mattoons were sincere and spent long years **to** raise Nai Naa and Nang Esther with **love**, and **experienced** abundant **fruit**.

Tirabutana's teachers taught English to their students by aiming to witness and spent less time forming relationships with them; consequently they did not see any converts.

Sixth, credibility of the gospel communicators and the church seems to be an important factor in the meek approach. A suitable role and status generates credibility for gospel communicators; this helps Buddhists to hear the gospel. Catholic priests and Protestant missionaries came to Siam and took roles as medical doctors, **teachers**, and **government** officials, roles highly acceptable by the Thai. In modern Protestant missions, Tirabutana was disappointed with the lifestyles of Christians **and** the church and this affected her search for God.

Seventh, family focused evangelism seems crucial in Christian witness in Thailand. The whole family line of Nai Naa and Nang Esther became good Christians. Luang Petch Songkram and Nang Buo Lai demonstrated that the whole family could be won to Christ. They **turned** their social networks into support groups when a person came to Christ.

Eighth, social action serves as a bridge to evangelism. It leads missionaries and Thai Christians to demonstrate Christlikeness to Buddhists smoothly and in a natural way. If social action is used by the **guidance of the** Holy Spirit and wisdom of God to touch the deepest needs of Buddhists they

can lead Buddhists to **Christ**. Social action is classified as a non-verbal presentation of the gospel. **It** is a powerful tool for sharing Christ to Buddhists. Bradley drew thousands of Buddhists to come closer to Christ by healing their diseases. This is a non-verbal Christian witness. But Bradley's presentation of the gospel pushed them far away from Christ. House and Mattoon opened their houses for Thai **children**, even embraced some of them to be their own children. Caswell and Tirabutana's teacher taught English to the **prince-priest** and Tirabutana. They drew many Buddhist monks and Thai students to them. Caswell got a permission from the prince-priest to share the gospel, but Tirabutana's teacher took his advantages from his student. The methods used by Tirabutana's teacher in presenting the gospel was not appropriate to the Thai.

Ninth, indigenous strategies reflect ingenuity of local Christians in integrating a number of meek elements mentioned above and applying them in a specific context. Nang Buo Lai and Luang Petch Songkram are good examples. Missionaries should observe and **learn** these strategies from Thai Christians.

The nine elements in Christian witness above are reflections of the meek approach as seen in the long history of Christian mission in Thailand. Missionaries and Thai Christians who demonstrate their Christian witness along the grain of these elements seem to produce much fruit. These nine elements can be divided into three main areas: **(1)** non-verbal elements, **(2)** verbal elements, and **(3)** various factors. Four important elements are included in non-

verbal elements, the presentation of the gospel is **categorized** in verbal elements, and **another** four elements are categorized in the section of **"various factors"** as seen in Figure 2. These elements are closely related to each others.

Gospel communicators should possess all of them at the same time. **Non-verbal** elements seem to be more important to Buddhists **than** verbal **elements**.

The use of these elements does not deny the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but rather depends totally on the Spirit to apply these elements in a specific context.

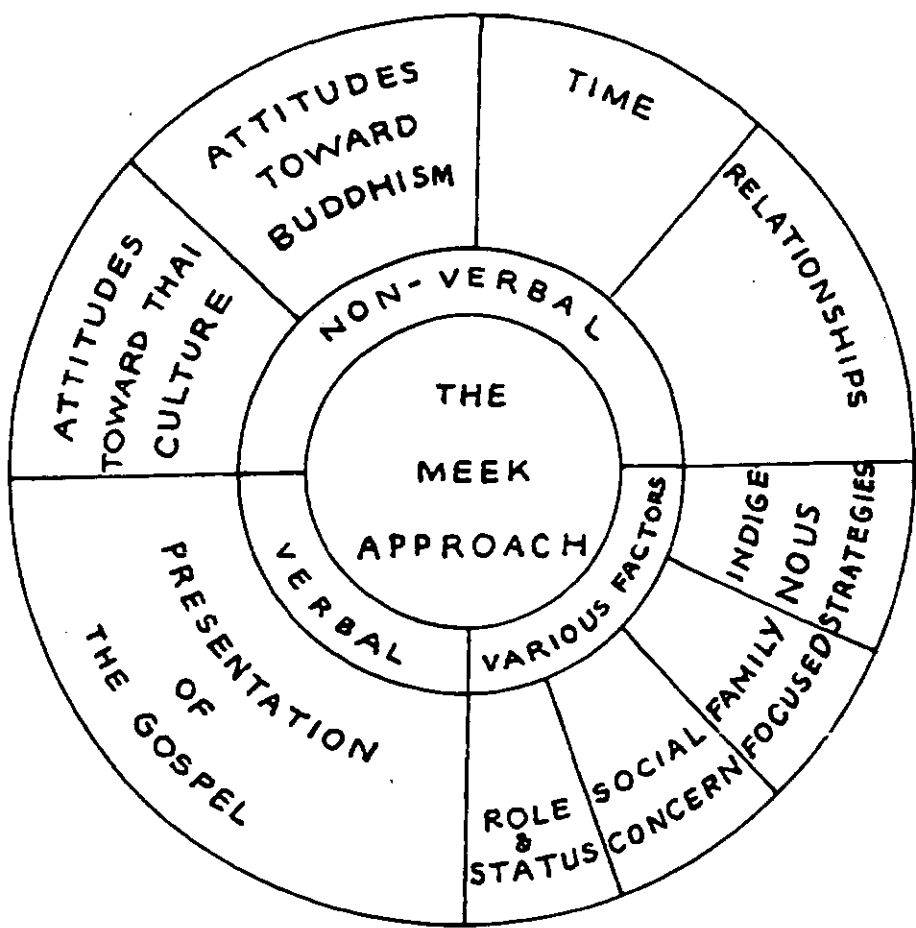


Figure 2

Major Factors in Christian Witness Demonstrated by Missionaries  
and Thai Christians Observed through the Historical Perspective  
of Christian Witness in Thailand

Summary

This chapter demonstrates the success and **failure** of Christian witness in Thailand through use of the meek or the aggressive approach in historical perspective in four eras of Christian missions: (1) early Roman Catholic missions, (2) early Protestant missions, (3) **modern** Roman Catholic missions, and (4) modern Protestant missions.

The strength of Roman Catholic missions has always been the introduction of Christianity through help and benefit to the society. In this way, Christian values are introduced in the society as a whole. The Catholic attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture is commendable. Sometimes, however, the Catholics go too far in leading their community through an attempt to win the whole group. Their intention is to introduce Christian values rather than the gospel of Jesus Christ as their real source of power to change peoples' lives, as can be seen in many modern Catholic communities in the modern era in Thailand. Two weak points emerge in this strategy: (1) the absorption method does not produce real conversion but rather biological conversion, and (2) Buddhists perceive Catholics' methods as aggressive because Buddhists believe Roman Catholics want to dissolve Buddhism and even the whole nation, although the Catholic intention has been to use the meek **approach**.

Protestant Christian witness reveals the other side of the coin. Protestants love to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in words, in season and out of season. Preaching the gospel to Buddhists as insiders in their social networks brings better results. A genuine relationship with Buddhists serves as a vehicle to **turn** the communicators of the gospel into insiders. Developing a relationship through appropriate roles and demonstrating Christ through their lifestyles is important, as is allowing a longer time for assimilation of the gospel. Christian witness in words is as important as Christian witness in deeds. Positive attitudes toward Buddhism and Thai culture need to be

developed by missionaries and Thai Christians by studying both seriously.

**Learning** from Christians and Thai Buddhists is recommended. Indigenous **strategies** should be used for explaining the gospel. Contact points in Thai culture and Buddhism can convey the meaning of the gospel. Waiting for the Holy Spirit and trusting him through prayer to create an atmosphere of searching for truth by the receptors of the gospel will help Christians and missionaries serve the Lord in joy, not as a burden.

This chapter reveals the actions that worked positively toward the meek approach by the Roman Catholic priests in the beginning of the early era of their missions, and why Caswell, Houses, Mattoons, Luang Pet Songkram, and Nang Buo Lai in the early era of Protestant missions followed a more meek approach. In modern Catholic missions, the Catholic church demonstrates the meek approach in its own perception, but is seen as aggressive by Buddhists in Thailand. Generally speaking, modern Protestant **missions** examined in this dissertation worked against the Thai meek approach. Suggestions have been made for each group by using the criteria discussed in Chapter 2 in order to improve their demonstration of meekness in Christian witness in Thailand.

Nine elements are observed as major factors in the meek approach in Christian witness in Thailand. Figure 2 divides these elements into two major **areas--non-verbal** and verbal. Non-verbal factors seem to play a more important role in cross cultural communication in Thailand than do verbal factors.

## CHAPTER 4

### Views Toward Early Witness

#### The Purpose and the Process of the Interview

The interviews discussed in Chapter 1 with missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists in Thailand were carried out according to plan. This chapter presents the results of those interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the real situation of the **Christian** witness in Thailand. The research was done from October 4 to December 4, 1996 in Thailand. Thai Buddhists who heard the gospel but have not believed in Christ and Thai **Christians** were interviewed by me in the following areas: (1) the **northern** part of Thailand, (2) the north **eastern** part of Thailand, (3) the central part of Thailand, and (4) the **southern** part of Thailand. American missionaries were interviewed in Bangkok, Thailand. Twenty-two missionaries, 54 Christians, and 40 Buddhists responded to my questions regarding real incidents of Christian witness in Thailand.

The interviewees responded to ten incidents and five open-ended questions. For the sake of the harmony in dissertation writing, I want to maintain the same chronological order of the historical incidents. Incidents 1 through 10 will be discussed first in this chapter. Chapter 5 will discuss answers of the interviewees to the five open-ended questions (A-E). The questions of incidents 1 through 10 and the questions A through E were designed so the interviewees could share their understandings, feelings, ideas, and reasons from their own points of view.

All participants except **American** missionaries were chosen by Thai pastors of local churches in various parts of Thailand. American missionaries were selected by myself. All respondents were selected from three main denominations in Thailand: (1) Church of Christ in Thailand (**C.C.T.**), (2) the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (E.F.T.), (3) Thailand Baptist Churches Association.

The ten incidents were derived from historical situations as recorded by missionaries. The first five incidents violate the Thai meekness norm, and the second five incidents are congruent with the meek approach in Christian witness. Of these ten, four were selected to be used in each interview. Two positive incidents and two negative incidents were chosen randomly for each interviewee. Incident 1 was used for all three groups.

The ten incidents (Incidents 1 through **10**) are derived from historical situations of former Christian witness in Thailand. Table 2 shows the responses of 22 missionaries, 54 Christians, and 40 Buddhists.

The interview process had four steps. First, the interview questions and ten incidents were written in the Thai language for Thai Buddhists and Thai Christians and in English for missionaries. Second, all respondents were interviewed by me during the period of two months. I used Thai language for the Thai and English language for missionaries. Third, all answers were recorded in longhand in blank spaces under each questions and then typed by my secretary into a computer in Bangkok, Thailand.

Fourth, all answers for each question and incident were printed out by the computer for closer observation and comparison.

Table 2

## The Number of Interview Respondents to Incidents 1-10

Incidents	Western Missionaries	Thai Christians	Thai Buddhists
1	22	54	40
2	15	36	18
3	14	32	9
4	8	32	3
5	11	38	9
6	10	26	25
7	10	28	6
8	9	34	14
9	11	43	29
10	16	54	2
Total numbers of Respondents	22	54	40

General Response to Incidents 1 through 10

This section contains summary findings of interview results of the three groups with regard to incidents 1 through 10. The groups in order are **Western** missionaries, Thai Christians, and Thai Buddhists.

1. The Response of Missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists to the FirstIncidentThe First Incident (November 18, 1868)

While waiting in the hall I had a long talk with Phya Booroot on what the Siamese **government** now needed to lift it up among the nations of the earth. He led me into the conversation by asking me how such an improvement could be made. The first step I proposed was that the **government** abandon the worship of idols and sustain the worship of the living and **eternal** God; second, that it abolish slavery; third, that it prohibit gambling; and fourth, that it encourage

the spread of all kinds of intelligence, establishing common schools, academies, colleges and universities. **Referring** to the first, second and third propositions, the Siamese nobleman dissented in many particulars. But in regard to the fourth he said he would go the whole figure. (**Feltus** 1936:281)

[Question 1: What do you think about the missionary's suggestion to Phya **Boorot**?]

The **response** of missionaries. Twenty-two missionaries answered regarding this incident. No missionary mentioned Phya **Boorot's** feeling after he heard Bradley's suggestions. One who paid the most attention to Phya Boorot said:

I think that his response was somewhat insensitive. His response probably did nothing as far as moving Phya Boorot toward Christ and may have done some harm and made him become more obstinate against Christians and Christ. He should have found a more tactful way to answer the question.

Four missionaries are aware of the inappropriateness of Bradley's wordings related to Phya Boorot. One of them said, "I am angry because Bradley made the wrong thing of the **issue**," while another missionary added, "**Bradley** created a barrier for himself. There is a truth in his statement, but he should not speak out." Another respondent explained:

Mo Bradley assumes that by taking over American values and practice of faith, the Siamese would find their way to **salvation**. However, the suggestions are highly insensitive and reveal that the missionary looks down on Thai customs, religious expressions and faith/religion. It is blind to the limitations of his own culture which he sees as identical with Christian culture.

Seventeen missionaries answered by way of analyzing Bradley's suggestions related to a number of areas (e.g., theology, sociology, true and false matter, and application of the suggestions in Siam).

The one who was interested in Bradley's answer in terms of a theology of mission responded:

Bradley saw clearly that Buddhism was idolatry. He did not *Kreng Jai* [show consideration] Phya Boorot though he could have. How many Christians and missionaries today are willing to call a spade a spade? Do you know anyone who **could** call Buddhism idolatry from the pulpit?

Another missionary added his idea in the same direction. He said, "I agree with Bradley. What he said is true. Idolatry is the problem of the country. But I should add that the Thai do not come to the faith **if** we just simply get rid of **idolatry**." Another respondent argued, "I think Bradley was too straightforward with Phya Boorot because Phya Boorot probably had a concept of God. To suggest that Buddhists stop worshipping idols and start worshipping God probably did not make sense to him."

Some of the missionaries' answers related to sociology and conversion. One of them shared his idea, The missionary was seeking major social changes in Thai society. They sought to do it before the Thai came to know Christ. Conversion must come before [social] change." One respondent shared, "**Bradley** should not present his statement as such. The gospel is the answer to individual lives. Bradley was suggesting moral change before conversion. His suggestion was **backward**." Another one said:

There is nothing wrong with his suggestion. However, it seemed that if he had suggested only that God had the power to solve the social problems of the country at the time, that it might have made the gospel more appealing and less watered down.

One missionary mentioned the form and meaning, **"My** first impression is that it is too direct. Values must be changed before forms. To change forms without changing values will result in only superficial **change."**

The following answers help readers to focus on what missionaries are really interested in. The first one said, **"It** seems to me that if **Dr.** Bradley's proposal was implemented God would be honored. It is difficult to tell from this point in time how it was said and what the exact circumstances were at the time." A second one responded, **"Since** Phya Boorot led the conversation and asked for suggestions, **I** think Mo Bradley's response as a proposal is fair. It seems like it could have been communicated a little more **tactfully."** A third missionary added, **"He** felt obligated to witness, but to try to improve Thai culture by throwing out idolatry created a wall."

The response of Christians. Fifty-four Christians answered this incident. Seventeen of them said that if Bradley's suggestions were applied in Thailand, the Thai would **know the** true God, and idolatry would be wiped out. One Thai Christian responded:

**I** think that Bradley's suggestion was good and correct in all aspects, if it can be made to work. But **I** do not know how we can implement Bradley's idea. If the Thai did not worship idols, Thailand would be a better country.

They agreed that **Bradley's** idea glorified Christ, but some of them wondered whether his idea was applicable in practice because the way Bradley suggested it was aggressive and the Thai needed time to apply it to the context. Though his recommendation was good, he touched the highest

thing which the Thai respect most. The way he suggested it was aggressive, **strong**, and **straightforward**," a Christian added.

Thirty-seven of them did not agree with Bradley. Thai Christians mentioned their ideas as follows:

The Thai could not accept it because it was too aggressive, strong, and strange a suggestion. His words were not polite. They were dictatorial, harsh and touched the core of their **belief**. His words were straightforward.

Another one mentioned about the concept of time and the idea of benefit. She said, "**Bradley** looked down on Thais as a whole. He wanted to change things too quickly. The Thai could not see any benefit in doing as he suggested."

Bradley's suggestions did not help Phya Boorot in understanding more about Christianity and Christ. One of them reflected, "**Bradley's** suggestions pointed the Thai to see Christianity as a '**do**' and '**don't**' religion." "**Bradley's** intention was good, but his presentation led to negative response. In fact, it would never lead to an implementation because the Thai belief system has continued for many hundreds of years," one Christian respondent injected his idea. One Christian related Bradley's suggestions to politics and domination from outside. He said, "**Bradley's** suggestions showed that he lacked understanding and gave the Thai the feeling that **Westerners** came to control and interfere **with** the **internal** matters of the Thai." "**Christianity** should not come to destroy good things in **Buddhism**," another Christian added.

Many Christians saw that Bradley was interested in the truth and right and wrong from the viewpoint of **Westerners** only. One representative of this idea added:

Bradley should have spoken the truth in love. The Thai wanted to accept new things, but keep the old things at the same **time**. Bradley was not **concerned** with relationships, but with the truth and right and wrong from his own **worldview**. This was in opposition to Thai values.

One Thai Christian said, "**What** Bradley would receive back was the dislike of the **Thai**." They could not accept the facts and so **turned** against Bradley," one of them added. They would not allow his proposal to happen in Thailand," one said.

Many Thai Christians suggested that when missionaries talk about these things, they should explain what benefits the Thai would receive in worshipping God. One Christian **suggested**, The Thai need explanations about the consequences of worshipping idols and benefits in worshipping God." "**Any** suggestions made by missionaries must bring more advantages than **disadvantages**," **another** respondent replied. Time to think and time for the conviction of the Holy Spirit are required by Buddhists. "**Bradley** should allow time for the Thai to think and allow the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts. Missionaries should wait for a divinely appointed time and God's opportunities. They should not talk only about the truth," a Christian said. Another one mentioned that Christianity generated through **missionaries'** lifestyle is more important than truth from their mouths, especially when rapport is not established. "But while waiting for that time, Christians should

demonstrate their lives as the light of the **world** and the salt of the **earth**," one of them suggested.

The Response of Buddhists. Forty Buddhists responded to this incident. They said, "**Bradley** did not have any right to say that the Thai should give up idol worship in Siam. Buddhism and Siam are not separable in the mind of the **Thai**." One Buddhist opposed Bradley, "**Bradley's** proposal was too **strong**, and he was too pushy. How can idolatry be related to the development of the country? The Thai agreed wholeheartedly with Bradley's suggestion in all matters except in giving up idol **worship**."

A Buddhist respondent added, "**Bradley** was a dictator and was not wise. His suggestion violated the identity of the Thai. His way was not the Thai way because it was **aggressive**." One of the respondents argued, "**If** we are married to a girl for a long period of time and see her goodness all of our lives, can we divorce her just because one day a person suggests it? It is nonsense and it is **also** impossible." One of them suggested, "**Buddhists** completely and absolutely disagreed with Bradley's idea. Buddhists don't want any outsiders commanding them or giving notice to them; they would like to use their own freedom to choose for themselves." Buddhists were irritated by Bradley's words. "**In** his pride he suppressed and **looked** down upon Buddhism," a Buddhist said.

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to the first incident. The majority of missionaries, Thai Christians, and all Buddhist respondents disagreed with Bradley's words. Forty percent of missionaries and 30 percent of Thai Christians felt that Bradley was obligated to witness.

Missionaries said that the truth which Bradley preached was correct, but the method of delivery was wrong. But Buddhists suggested that Bradley's wrong methods derived from wrong attitudes. Buddhists suggested that Bradley violated Thai identity.

Christians and missionaries agreed that Bradley was too direct, insensitive, and backward in strategy. Both missionaries and Christians disliked Bradley's strategies. Buddhists did not like Bradley's being. All three groups confirmed that Bradley's strategies were aggressive.

## 2. The Response of Missionaries, Christians, and Buddhists to the Second Incident

### The Second Incident (February 16, 1857)

The daughter of **Somdet** Phra Ong Noi first requested me to teach her the Ten Commandments. I did so. She inquired why it was wicked to worship idols. I explained the reason to her. She saw clearly and said to those about her, that what I said was true. I then proceeded to tell her that all the work of building idol temples and making idols, making priests, feeding them and so on is sin. She inquired why it was that I condemned all such work. I said it was because it is a violation of the expressed command of God. I then took occasion to say to her that Buddha was infinitely inferior to him who formed him. That Jesus himself alone was the maker of Buddha, that Buddha made no world nor any part of the world, as their books taught; that he lived by the power and grace of Jesus and that he died because Jesus made him die. That if he died a believer in Jesus he had gone to worship Jesus in heaven. But if he died an unbeliever in Jesus he must now be in hell.  
(Feltus 1936:195)

[Question 2. What do you think of Mo Bradley's answer in the above **incident?**]

[Question 3. Do you think **Bradley's** ideas affected the propagating of the gospel in **Siam?**]

The response of missionaries. Fourteen missionaries opposed Bradley's method. Only one agreed with Bradley. He **said**, "What Bradley mentioned was absolute truth and needed to be **proclaimed.**" But thirteen missionaries believed that Bradley's answer was insensitive, straightforward, lacked tactfulness and may have hindered the gospel. Missionaries expressed their ideas toward Bradley's ministries as follows. One missionary said:

He showed his exclusivist understanding of true faiths. He was more **concerned** with his principle dogmatic stand than to find a way of relating the gospel truth to his listener in such a way she could understand. He must have appeared to be condemning. He was a messenger of doom rather than the good news.

Another missionary respondent suggested, "**Bradley** is attacking not a religious system, as he perceives, but individual **Thais.**" The next one added:

Again, I believe that Bradley's answer was insensitive and counter productive as I stated earlier I have found that it is best never to speak negatively of Buddhism or Buddha when evangelizing a Thai person. It does nothing to lead the person to Christ.

Some missionaries tried to suggest better methods for Bradley. One missionary said, "I think he should have stopped at the point where **Somdet**

Phra Ong Noi agreed that what he said was **true.**" While another missionary respondent suggested:

Bradley spoke the truth in **answering** her question, but he could have used a milder tone [most missionaries at *present* would not be brave enough to speak the truth **clearly**]. We have to find ways to speak that *truth* **[concerning** idols] today.

One missionary **added**, "I am not sure he should have referred to Jesus as creator of Buddha, but rather as creator of all **people** and deserving of their complete **worship.**" A missionary responded that Bradley should have waited and developed a closer relationship so that she would understand what he said. He said:

His answer appears to be very **straightforward**, perhaps too much so. I think it would be much more preferable to wait until the person [in this case **Somdet Pra** Ong Noi] is either more softened to the gospel or becomes a Christian before such an explanation is given. It is possible that such an explanation may have hindered the gospel. In general, what should be avoided is throwing up unnecessary barriers for someone to come to the Lord. **Further**, in speaking of the Buddha, one who is so highly respected in Thai society, one needs special caution. It might be the best thing to preach the gospel, teach the scripture and allow people (at some point) to arrive at their own conclusion.

One missionary suggested **that** Bradley should explain to her who God is. Comparison without understanding leads nowhere. She said:

I think it came across very proud. Like "**Our** God is better than **yours.**" If the girl did not understand who God was, then making a comparison between God and Buddha was probably a bad thing. So many variables are very important: your relationship with the person, where are they in their understanding of the subject, and your tone of voice.

Thirteen missionaries answered question 3. Nine out of thirteen mentioned **Bradley's** words. A missionary expressed, "I would suspect a

negative effect and **I** would have been offended to have been **talked** to in such an insensitive **way.**" An interviewee **added,** "**I** am confident it did. It helps explain why **Thai** people are suspicious of **missionaries** and **Christianity.**"

A new missionary who had never read a biography of Mo Bradley suggested that **Bradley's** words would cause a slowdown of the progress of the gospel in Thailand. He suggested, "**From** the excerpts that you placed in your questionnaire, it seems to me that his relating to the Thai in an insensitive manner must have slowed down the progress of the gospel in **Thailand.**"

Three missionaries did not think **Bradley's** method affected propagating the gospel in Siam that much because Bradley spoke the truth plainly. One missionary respondent commented, "**Probably** relating only to those to whom he personally witnessed. But **I** do not think his methods have affected it all that **much.**" "**No,**" another one said, "**Did** anyone else since then speak the truth as **plainly?**" "**I** think that what was aggressive was Bradley's sharing of the gospel **cognitively** to the Thai. His logical mind set was perceived as aggressive by the **Thai,**" one of them added.

The last one was not sure whether the incident was negative or positive. He mentioned, "**I** am sure **it** affected the propagating of the gospel, but whether negatively or positively, **I** am not **sure.**"

The Response of Christians. All **thirty-six** Thai Christian respondents disagreed with **Bradley's strategies.** Their answers pointed in the same

direction. One of them **said**, "**Bradley's** words were aggressive, degrading to **Buddha**, and impolite to the **Thai**." Another respondent added, "**He** touched the sensitive part of the Thai, **triggering** the egos of the Thai which could lead to outbursts. Words like '**lower**' or '**Buddha** is in **hell**' would pierce like a knife in Thais' **hearts**. **It** was offensive for **Bradley** to put down Buddha and **lift** up Jesus **Christ**."

Many of them said that the Thai would hate Christianity, close their hearts to the gospel, and missionaries would not see any results. One said, "The hearts of the Thai would be closed to the gospel and no results would be seen. The reaction from the hearers would be negative and **strong**." Another Thai Christian suggested, "**Unimpressed**, the Thai would **turn** away immediately and would hate **Christians**."

The Response of Buddhists. Eighteen Buddhists answered this question. All of them agreed with Thai Christians. One commented:

What Bradley said contradicted Thai customs. Bradley was not a **scholar** of religions for he did not study Buddhism but tried to **sell** Christianity by pushing it into Buddhists' throats and using his own standard. He judged Buddhism by himself. He claimed that he was a judge and looked down upon other religions.

Some of them said that they did not like Bradley because he lacked *Nam Jai* (minds and hearts). She **said**, "The Thai disagreed with Bradley and disliked him for not carrying *Nam Jai* in a smooth and soft way. It was wrong to do aggressive ministry like Bradley's." One Buddhist respondent suggested, "It would bring negative effects and results. Buddhists will look

negatively at **Christians** and be prejudiced against Christianity. The majority of **Buddhists, I believe,** do not want to embrace aggressive **things.**"

Many of them suggested how to improve the Christian witness of missionaries and Thai Christians. One added, "**Christian** witness would improve by choosing words carefully before speaking. If possible, Christians and missionaries should stop talking about **Buddhism.**" "**Christians** should choose acceptable methods which Buddhists **like,**" another one suggested. "**Explanation** is needed. For example, what is sin? Christians should carefully explain the subject in a smooth **way,**" one Buddhist shared his idea.

Only a few pushed the discussion further about what needs to be considered by the Christian church. A Buddhist respondent said:

From the perspectives of **Buddhists,** Christians are **aliens,** hired by **Westerners.** They are **Noog Reed**[outside of Thai **culture**]. They are hired to do aggressive things in Thailand. Buddhists argued that Buddha could not believe in Christ because he was **born** into this world prior to Christ.

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to incident 2.

The majority of missionaries and Thai Christians and all Buddhists respondents disagreed with Bradley's witnessing. Again, missionaries and Thai Christians said that the strategy of Bradley was inappropriate but the content of the truth was correct.

Buddhists looked from their point of view and mentioned the roots of the problem. They are: **(1)** missionaries are seen as outsiders, **(2)** Christians who did the same thing as missionaries did are seen as outsiders and are

hired by Westerners. All groups confirmed that Bradley's strategies and his ministry produced little if any fruit.

### 3. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to the Third

#### Incident

#### The Third Incident (**February 22. 1851**)

I held a religious discussion with the head man in the hearing of others. The old man finding himself feeble in argument finally said to me that he could not believe what I told him about Jesus unless I revealed his person. He went off pretending to triumph over me, because I said honestly that I could not show him the body of Jesus. I then addressed myself to others who were about me and spoke of Jesus as revealed by his works and power to save, the latter of which I could testify from blessed experience. I spoke out boldly **against** the folly and sin of Buddhism and the uselessness and wickedness of making idol temples and becoming priests of Buddha. One man begged me to desist from speaking against making temples lest it should come to the King's ears and he should be angry. I told him that I must speak out and not at all afraid of the anger of his Majesty against me. Afterwards, I spoke against the chief priest and suggested that I had in my boat at the landing a number of tracts **concerning** Jesus which I would like very much for him to read, and distribute to others under him. (Feltus 1936:135).

[Question 4. What are your ideas and feelings **concerning** Bradley's speech to the chief **priests?**]

The response of missionaries. Fourteen missionaries said that this was a very confrontational, negative, insensitive, bold, and offensive approach. One of missionaries **said**, "In this incident, Bradley not only made a mistake of being insensitive and offensive in his speech, but he also made a tragic mistake of making an attack on those in authority and making them lose face." A missionary respondent suggested:

Again, this is a very confrontive approach which is not likely to bear much fruit. I admire him for his boldness and directness, but

it should be tempered with wisdom. His approach should have been much more positive rather than negatively tearing down Buddhism. I do not think it was Paul's approach to attack the local religious ideas when he was on his evangelistic tours. One might argue that Jesus took a similar approach to Dr. Bradley with the Jews of his **day**, but I think it can be shown that Jesus generally did not **directly** attack them. At least he did not directly attack the Jews until much **later** in his ministry (see Matthew 23). In any case, he was one who had perfect knowledge of the times and culture and we as missionaries do not.

All missionaries disagreed with Bradley's approach because he built his argument before sharing the gospel of Jesus. They concluded that this approach was not likely to bear much fruit. A missionary said:

Bradley was very bold and offensive. He spoke against the chief priest and then asked him to read his tracts. There is some truth in what he said, but the vehicle of communication made the reception of the message nearly impossible. I saw no respect shown.

Missionary respondents added that the zeal of missionaries lead them not to be fearful, but this does not mean that we must not be careful in building bridges of communication. One said, "**It** sounds offensive to me and thus uncaring as well. His zeal is admirable and his desire to speak the truth **unimpeachable.**" Another one suggested, "**We** missionaries should not be fearful, but at the same time we must be careful. Missionaries must not fear anything, fear is not good, but we must also build bridges."

One of missionaries **mentioned**, "**You** cannot win the people when you speak harshly about what they **believe.**" Another missionary continued, "**You** should major on the positive things of the **gospel.**"

Many missionaries saw that the opportunity to share the gospel was lost. One added, "**I** find it both sad and disturbing that such an apparent

opportunity to extend the love of Christ was so foolishly **wasted.**" Another one wondered why Bradley had not been killed. He said, "**He** told the truth, but God in his sovereignty kept Bradley from being beaten, arrested, killed or expelled."

The response of Christians. **Thirty-two** Thai Christians explained why Bradley's words break the hearts of the Thai. A Christian mentioned:

Bradley was interested in right and wrong. His words lacked understanding about Buddhistic visual elements. They argued that most of the Thai do not worship idols. Idols remind them of the goodness of Buddha just as the cross reminds Christians of Christ's love on the cross. Visual elements help them stop sinning.

Another Christian respondent suggested:

Bradley's words were not soft but created hard feelings. Bradley wanted to push the gospel into the Thais' hearts. His approach created a high wall in Thai's hearts, a wall of hatred of Christianity. His approach was even unbiblical (Jude 8-10). His words were too direct, aggressive, ungrateful. They showed disrespect and lack of understanding. He looked down upon people and using *farang's*[**Westerners**] mentality and styles of conversation.

Though the Thai tried to **warn** him, he did not realize it. A Christian interviewee suggested, "**He** stumbled over all three things the Thai respect the most: **(1)** monarchy, **(2)** Buddhism, and **(3)** the nation. He ended his own opportunity for future witnessing. His point of view is not one with which the Thai **agree.**" This incident created a big question mark in the minds of the Thai. A Christian asked, "**Does** Dr. Bradley love the **Thai?**" or "**He** enjoyed his own sayings but did not care much about the results. He was very happy with himself. His words may have been true, but he tore down **all** relationships."

The response of Buddhists. Nine Thai Buddhists disagreed with Bradley and expressed their ideas angrily. One of them said:

Bradley forgot to separate God in Christianity from *Dharma* in Buddhism. He identified as sinners all Buddhist monks who were good and held their *Dharma*. Bradley set up his own standard and called his standard a correct one. The **Buddhists'** standard is wrong from Bradley's perspective.

Bradley's ministries derived from the fact that: **(1)** he lacked understanding of Thai culture, and **(2)** he had pride. Another Buddhist mentioned, This approach created inherent difficulties, for no one would like to be Christian after hearing Bradley. This idea of Bradley's derived from his lack of understanding of Thai customs and culture. More than that, Bradley tried to trample other **religions.**" One of them answered, "**Buddhists** understand this way of reasoning as pride. Bradley put others down while exalting himself. The more he propagated Christianity, the more Thais would hate him and his **religion.**"

General conclusion of the **response** of all three groups to incident 3.

All three groups disagreed with Bradley's approach. Fourteen American missionaries who responded to this incident gave reasons related to their success in Christian witness. Thirty-two Thai Christians expressed their feelings and ideas about Bradley's words. They provided reasons why Bradley's word tore the hearts of the Thai Buddhists. Nine Thai Buddhists poured out their feelings and frustrations and even argued with Bradley.

Missionaries admired Bradley's boldness, directness, courage, and zeal, but they disagreed with his approach because it lacked of humility and understanding.

Thai **Christians** disapproved of Bradley's witnessing because it created a high wall of hatred of Christianity. Bradley violated Thai identity. Thai Christians do not see idol worship as bad as Bradley saw **it**. They also provided reasons that idols remind Buddhists of the goodness of Buddha.

Buddhists saw that Bradley set up his own standard and used that standard to judge the religious activities of Buddhists. **Bradley's** ideas generated words and activities which the context could not accept.

#### 4. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to TheFourth

##### Incident

##### The Fourth Incident (September 6. 1868)

I went out to ask the Lord to direct my step, not knowing I should stop to perform my wayside preaching. Having reached the court of Temple Chaeng I found quite a number of priests and laymen assembled, some doing **government** work and some engaged in idle talk. I sat down on a log among them while they huddled around me as if anxious to hear what I had to say to them about Jesus and his religion. I read from my tract the Miracles of Jesus. But ere I had read fifteen minutes my audience had **nearly** all left me as if I had nothing interesting to relate to them, and yet I have positive evidence that they understood sufficiently well for what I said and read to have made a deep impression on their minds. Seeing myself almost alone I went away groaning in spirit and found another company sitting in a "**sala**" [a place for a small gathering] and to them I talked and read on the Law of God, man's hopelessness by it and **man's** redemption by the righteousness of Christ. Being very weary, I left them with little more hope for them than for the preceding company. On my **return**, I felt too weary to kneel in prayer, and I cast myself on my couch and groaned out my petitions to the Lord. (Feltus 1936:278)

[ Question 5. What do you think about the method of propagating of the gospel of Dr. **Bradley**?]

The response of missionaries. Eight missionaries responded to this incident. Two of them agreed with Bradley's methods but the rest did not. Those two missionaries said they did not find fault with this method in particular. One of them mentioned, "**People** got up and left because Bradley's fluency in reading the Siamese language and the content of the tract were not interesting to **them**." Another added, "**Fifteen** minutes is about the attention span of most people. He suggested that Bradley might have enhanced his presentation if he had used **pictures**."

The rest of the respondents doubted Bradley's love and interest for the **Thai**. One said, "**I** wondered about Bradley's love for the Thai while telling them about Christ, or **if** he told them **lovingly**." A missionary respondent said, "**Bradley** did not understand the needs of the people because he did not develop any relationships **with** them. He saw them as a project or a **prospect--not** a person."

Missionaries added three things that they thought that Bradley lacked: (1) develop a relationship with the Thai, (2) find people's felt needs, and (3) present the gospel to touch the needs. A missionary suggested, "**Bradley** should have found out their needs, where they hurt, and showed them how Christ could meet them at the point of need. Then eventually he could share the gospel with **them**." One missionary observed that Bradley did not develop any relationships. He said, "**It** seems that his approach was

rather that of preaching the gospel to strangers and not that of sharing the gospel with friends. Creation of interest was **needed.**"

The response of Christians. **Thirty-two** Christians shared their ideas regarding this incident. The answers combine both weak points and strong points of Bradley's strategies. Weak points are mentioned more than strong points. A Christian also suggested, "**Bradley** found a new way to proclaim the **gospel.**" A Thai Christian saw good points as well as bad points in Bradley's strategies. "**His** good points," he said, "**Were** that Bradley was faithful in preaching the gospel. He obeyed what God commanded him to do. Though he did not care whether the **Thai** would listen or not, he did care that he should do what God commanded."

One Christian mentioned, "**I** think that Bradley tried hard though he **realized** he was not successful from a human perspective." A Christian respondent said, "**We** are just workers; we should perform our duties to the best of our ability and give the results to God."

One Christian spoke positively about his ministry:

Opposition is normal. Faithfulness and diligence are more important. Bradley was very patient. He followed the way of the **apostles**. He had good intentions and good methods. He loved God and had enthusiasm. He started his ministry with prayer. He imported a new way of introducing a new thing. The Thai are interested in new things only for a short period of time.

Two weak points in Bradley's strategies were mentioned. The first is **concerned with** his target group and second is his method. A Christian suggested, "**Bradley** chose the most difficult **group--the** monks and laymen in

temples. Bradley did not pay attention when selecting a target **group**."

Another Christian mentioned about **Bradley's** method:

His method of approach was to attack because he was a *Jai Roon* [hot **heart**]. This is not a Thai way of presenting *Dharma*. He did not introduce himself before he shared Christianity and thus created a **gap, mistrust**, and reluctance on the part of his hearers in making any decision.

Another respondent added:

Bradley's method was not appropriate to the **Thai**. The content he read caused listeners to leave him. At first, the listeners, showed interest and chose to hear Bradley, but after sharing for twenty minutes people dispersed.

The response of **Buddhists**. Two Buddhists answered regarding this incident. One of them said, The time was not right for sharing the **gospel**."

Another mentioned, "**What** he said was not wrong, but the **difficulty** was the results did not come out as Bradley desired."

General conclusion of the responses of all three **groups** to incident 4.

Missionaries mentioned that Bradley's approach was that of preaching the gospel to strangers unlovingly and not that of sharing the gospel with friends with love. Thai Christians agreed with the missionaries. They suggested two weak points in **Bradley's** witnessing: **(1)** *Jai Roon* (hot heart or too quick to do things), and **(2)** reading the gospel without *sanuke* (fun and pleasure). Buddhists said that Bradley did not have **Kala Tesa** (share gospel with wrong persons, wrong time, and wrong place). This may derive from the fact that Bradley did not know Thai culture.

5. The Response of Missionaries, Christians, and Buddhists to the Fifth Incident

The Fifth Incident

Donald C. Lord, an American scholar who is presently Associate Professor of History at Texas Woman's University wrote Mo Bradley and Thailand (1969). In his book, he wrote about a comment of a Thai noble on Bradley's character by stating that: "there must be something in your religion different from ours to create such a man, one who never showed anger no matter how badly he was abused by the Thai." (Lord 1969:207)

[ Question 6. Please tell me, what do you think about the comment of a Thai noble on Bradley's character and Christian religion?]

The response of missionaries. Eleven missionaries responded to this incident. Nine of them agreed that Christian lives speak louder than words.

One added:

I think it was wonderful that the Thai noble observed the difference in Bradley's life. This is the kind of life witness that is needed to interest people to the point that they would want to know what is different about the Christians.

One of the missionaries observed, "Though Bradley had little understanding of how he could effectively share the gospel with the Thai, Bradley was Christlike and he loved God and the Thai."

A missionary respondent confirmed, "Bradley's behavior spoke more positively than his words." For this reason one of the missionaries concluded, "If we want to reach the Thai, they may learn from our lifestyles more than words." "It is not only missionaries' words or what they said, but

their **lives**," another advised. **"We** should live our **Christian** lives in front of these **people**," another proposed.

This incident confirmed that if missionaries allow Christ to change their lives how much they will affect the Thai. One interviewee said, **"The** Thai observed that Christianity has power to demonstrate a high ethical life in Bradley. If we believe in Christ, our lives should affect the **Thai**."

Only two missionaries mentioned that Bradley's character in itself might not have had any power to move that noble to repent. Unless God **intervenes**, the Thai cannot believe in Christ. He said, **"Did** Bradley's character in itself move that noble to repent? **No**. Unless God intervenes, they cannot **believe**."

The response of Thai Christians. **Thirty-eight** Thai Christians answered regarding this incident. Thirty-four of them agreed that Bradley's character was connected with the teaching of Christianity. Twelve out of 34 Christians said that lifestyle is an important door for evangelism because the Thai are able to see differences. One Christian noted, "Buddhists observe our lives more keenly than we realize." All Thai Christian respondents were impressed by **Bradley's** character and wanted to imitate it. But the Christians said we have to talk about Christ and his gospel, too. One Christian respondent added, "Bradley's life was beautiful and he loved Christ. His weakness was that he loved to speak in a straightforward way while the Thai like to hear what they call *Pood Omm Omm* [speak in a round about **way**]."

All Thai are interested in a quality of **life** which enables them to be interested in Christ because **it** shows God's character, and the Thai can see God. One Christian said, "**Life** is louder than words. Spoken words may not be understood, but good ethical lives shine and cause Thai people to compare the differences by themselves. This is an important door which may lead Christians and missionaries to share the **gospel**."

The response of Buddhists. Nine Buddhists (all of them) admired Bradley greatly in his quality of life. Patience (*Od Toon*) is one of many qualities Buddhists admire. One said, "**Buddhists** understood that this quality in his life related to his religion. They saw Christianity as a meek and polite and wonderful religion through which God blessed his disciples by controlling his own emotions well." Buddhists were greatly impressed by Bradley's behavior. A Buddhist suggested, "They were certain that most Buddhists are surprised to find patient Christians. They would accept Christianity if they found Christians not angry like Bradley." One of them said, "I believe it is difficult to find such a man because many Buddhists would like to express their anger."

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to incident 5.

All three groups of respondents agreed that: (1)**Bradley's** life spoke louder than his preaching, (2) Bradley's character was connected **with** the teachings of Christianity and caused the Thai to follow Christ by imitating Bradley's behaviors, and (3) Buddhists see Christianity through the lives of believers.

6. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to the Sixth Incident

The Sixth Incident (**August 17. 1850**)

Dr. Dan Beach Bradley recorded in his diary on August 17, **1850** as follows: **Kroma Kundej** sent his boat to receive me in the **afternoon** as he wished me to see his sick son and prescribe for him. **I** went and had a very pleasant interview with his royal highness and found his son suffering from a troublesome cough. His father said he had heard that **I** had devoted myself almost entirely to preaching and distribution of Tracts and did not practice medicine any more and that he therefore hesitated to send for me. That he could not trust his Siamese physicians but could trust me and wished to put his son under my care for he had seen me perform wonderful works such as he had never **seen** the Siamese physicians perform. Said he, "**If you cure him I shall not mind giving you two or three changs of silver**" [a change is 80 **ticals**, about **forty-eight dollars.**] It was at this prince's palace that **I** once performed the **operation** for cataract in his presence and gave his servant sight. The prince was greatly delighted with the result and said in the fullness of his **heart**, That **I** was not a human Doctor but **Angelic.**" (Feltus 1936:124)

[ Question 7. Please tell me what do you think about the ministry of Rev. **Bradley?**]

The response of missionaries. Ten missionaries responded to this question. All of them agreed that Bradley's practicing medicine was a more effective way to share the gospel to the Thai than distributing **tracts**. They said that any ministries that touched **Thais'** felt needs lead to open **people's** hearts. One commented, "**He** should not have stopped practicing medicine, as this would have been a more effective way to share the gospel to the **Thai.**" A woman missionary said, "**It** seems that meeting the physical needs of the Siamese people was a good way for people to open their hearts to hear what Rev. Bradley would have to say."

Although all respondents agreed with Bradley's ministry, some missionaries suggested some cautions. One said, "It might have been a good thing if he had continued his medical practice at least on a limited basis, as a means of winning the hearts of the Thai people to **Christ.**" One of them proposed his idea without knowing that Bradley had supported himself throughout for his missionary carrier. He said, "I was surprised by how much time Bradley spent in the world of business."

One missionary suggested:

Rev. Bradley could reach people much more effectively by **working** as a doctor. The danger was that his "**power**" was attributed to himself, i.e. people would respect him and not see how his medical skills were a gift from God. But this would be a good challenge for him in the exercising of his ministry, i.e. to point to God in all his doings.

The response of Christians. Twenty-six Christian respondents answered this question. Twenty of them suggested that social responsibility and evangelism can be combined in the ministry of one person. One of them responded:

Medical practice served as a bridge to evangelism because **it** showed love, help, and benefit. It also created trust and good impressions which were able to build a close relationship and opportunity to dialogue.

Another suggested, "The Thai did not see and understand God. This method helped them to see God's goodness and opened their minds and hearts to **Christ.**"

Five of them answered positively. They said that Bradley's ministry revealed God's power to Buddhists. One of them said:

- The Thai are very keen observers of people. A good person must show a good life. Then Buddhists will see the power of God in him or her. The Thai are able to come to their own conclusions easily when they see a godly Christian.

An old Christian in the north said, This method could speed up the rate of conversions and increase the number of **Christians.**"

Only one Christian gave a caution. He said, **"Using** modem science in primitive areas might cause people to equate Bradley's ministry with their **shaman."**

The response of Buddhists. All Buddhists agreed with Bradley's ministries, for they created *Nam Jai* (grateful heart), *Toon Tun Jai* (overwhelming heart), and *Prakoon* (grace) to the Thai. One said:

Bradley's determination to serve the Thai was admirable. His ministry had brought goodness to the Thai through medical helps. Bradley lifted up their crises by curing their diseases. This creates *Nam Jai* [grateful heart], *Toon Tun Jai* [overwhelming heart], and *Prakoon* **[grace]**.

One Buddhist respondent suggested, This is the real power. Bradley's ministry proved that he worked because of the needs of the people, not just as a tool to be used to open Thais' hearts."

General conclusion of the responses of all three **groups** to incident 6.

All missionaries and Buddhist respondents and the majority of Christians agreed with Bradley's ministry in combining social work and evangelism. They may be effective in Thailand because people's hearts would open easily. **Christlikeness** and the power of God are shown naturally. The ministry can be used greatly without conditioning people. Buddhists said

that Bradley made them *Toun Tun Jai* (touched with love and overwhelming). They mentioned that this is the real power of Christ.

7. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to the Seventh Incident

The Seventh Incident (**November 21, 1845**)

Dr. Bradley wrote about the blessing of God on the ministry of Rev. Jessy Caswell, a pioneer missionary to Siam during Bradley's era. This incident was recorded on November **21, 1845**.

Brother Caswell seems to be blessed by God in his work at Chao Fa **Yai's** temple where he has an interesting class of priests studying the English language, among whom is the prince himself. After teaching them about an hour he retires to a room which the prince has fitted up for him to preach the Gospel and to distribute tracts and there he labors more directly as an ambassador of the Cross of Christ. He reports several interesting hearers. Today, he had a fine opportunity to distribute tracts to a large company of royal personages and their attendants **who** came to make a present to Chao Fa Yai. The prince himself first proposed that he give books to these individuals. It is pleasant to see by such a proof that there is nothing like introduction of our books in the king's palace or in the royal family. Who knows what amount of good the many precious tracts which Brother Caswell gave away today, and which will be carried into various of the royal families, will do. (Feltus 1936:102)

[Question 8. Please tell me what do you think about the ministry of Rev. Jessy **Caswell?**]

The response of missionaries. Ten missionaries answered regarding this incident. Nine out of ten admired Caswell's **life** and his ministry. One of them mentioned about Caswell's life, "**Caswell's** ministry seems less confrontive than Bradley's. He obviously had a good relationship with the prince that enabled him to give out **tracts.**" Another missionary mentioned

the same thing. He **said**, "**Caswell** had built some good relationships through serving the Thai people and because of **this**, lead him to share Christ **with** the **Thai**."

One of many good things Caswell demonstrated in this incident was trying to help people and love them before sharing the gospel. His ministry met the Thai people halfway. A missionary respondent said:

Caswell was trying to help meet the need they had before sharing the gospel. He demonstrated his desire to love the people first. How exiting to see how Caswell was accepted by royalty in Thailand and how he must have been one whose life was evident of the living God.

Three out of nine mentioned the tract ministry of Caswell. It sounds to them like Caswell stressed tracts heavily. And this does not guarantee any interest on the Thai. The distribution of tracts cannot be used to substitute the **incamational** model of Christian witness. One **mentioned**, "**It sounds like** a heavy reliance on tracts. Incredible opportunities presented, just not sure what Caswell communicated in word and **deed**." Another respondent added, "**I** am not against the tracts, but the witness of a life that is **Christ-like** makes a stronger statement than a message on **paper**." The last one spoke well of incamational ministry. He said:

Again, this is hard to make much of a comment after reading just a brief description, but it seemed that he had built some good relationships through serving the Thai and because of this had an open door to share Christ **with** them. Regarding the distribution of tracks, I believed that this should never be a substitute for the incamational model of the Christian living out **Christ's** life and loving the people around them, loving to sharing the gospel with the people around them. However, when it is used as a **supplementary** tool it can be helpful and it can also yield benefits

in that it can, perhaps, go and reach beyond places that the individual could not go and have access to.

One missionary commented negatively. He said:

I need information to answer the question. As an **aside**, Thai Christians by and large seem to believe that certain members of the royal family are Christians. They believe this in spite of vast evidences to the contrary. No Thai Christians would dare to tell a Buddhist that **Somdet** Ya [a late mother of the King Rama IX] or one of the princesses is a Christian, but they have tried to convince me of this. Why?

The response of Christians. **Twenty-eight** Christians were involved in answering this question. Twenty-four of them answered that Caswell's methods were very good, but they expressed caution. One said, "**Missionaries** might create a mindset in the Thai that Christianity is only **concerned** with getting **something**." Another mentioned, "**Missionaries** might create a mindset in the Thai that there is the idea of **reciprocity**." And the third one added, "Missionaries might create a hidden agenda in the minds of **Buddhists**."

Role and status caused Chao Fa to listen because he was a student, but he would not believe in God. Those who received tracts often did not know written language or did not quite understand "**Christian** language." Caswell should have started where the people were. A Thai Christian suggested, "I think that Chao Fa had to listen to Caswell because he was a student and he *Kreng Jai*. But he knew who he was and he would not believe in God." Another Christian added, "The Thai were fond of receiving many things for free. Caswell's tract distribution did not tell that receivers

understood the contents. The best way, I think, was to tell the people about God by starting from what Buddhists may understand about **him.**"

The whole group of 28 Christians said that the holistic ministry of Caswell was good because Caswell used correct **role** and status. One said, The Thai respect teachers. Caswell fit Thai culture. He taught free of charge and developed relationships for eighteen months. Caswell provided according to the needs of the **Abbot--English** language and **sciences.**"

Another Christian added, **"At** the same time, he introduced the word of God easily and smoothly. Caswell sowed the seed by the help and cooperation of the Abbot."

The response of Buddhists. Six Buddhists responded to the question. Three Buddhists mentioned that Caswell found a better way to build up a relationship, especially with a leader of all Buddhist monks. This way enabled Caswell to contact others. One of them said, **"Caswell's** ministry was very soft and I believe that good things would follow. Caswell knew the needs of the target group. He contacted the leader of the group and this led to knowing many people under him." Another Buddhist respondent **added,** The relationship and the **nearness** between Caswell and his students may reveal Caswell's sincerity in the future. We have to help people in a sincere way."

Three of them made comments about **Caswell's** tract distribution. "I **do** not see any benefit in giving a **tract,**" a Buddhist said. "Buddhists would see it as a story, not a religious truth," the second one added. The last one

confirmed, "I do not see how a **story** in a piece of paper can change people's lives. It was useless because these people were devout Buddhists. They believed in Buddhism for a long period of time. It must take a long time to change **them**."

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to incident 7.

Missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists agreed with Caswell's ministry. Caswell's method was very good because he demonstrated according to their needs by a soft method. Caswell chose a correct role and status in Thai culture--a teacher. The other reason that all respondents gave was that Caswell was relational and less confrontive. Caswell was able to demonstrate a **Christ-like** life and his ministry confirms the idea of reciprocity.

8. The Response of Missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists to the Eighth Incident

The **Eighth** Incident (In 1867)

The Reverend and Mrs. Stephen Mattoon (**1847-1865**) and Dr. Samuel House, M.D. and his wife (1847-1876) were missionaries in Siam. They were Bradley's friends, and I hope you will think about the ways these missionaries led the Thai to Christ in the eighth incident below.

In **1848**, Mrs. Mattoon had begun to teach some little girls and boys and later she opened a school in Peguan village near the mission compound. Two orphaned children were taken into the home of missionary leaders in the Christian community. These were **Kru** Naa, given by his dying father to Dr. House in 1853, and Esther given by her father to Dr. and Mrs. Mattoon in the same year. Esther lived with them and when finally Mrs. Mattoon was obliged to **return** to America because of ill health, Esther accompanied her and the children. She **returned [to Siam]** three years later. Esther then continued to live with Mrs. Mattoon,

teaching a little class of eight or ten children to read Siamese. She united with the church in **1860**. Nai Naa married Esther in **1863** or **1864**, before he had become Christian. He was baptized on February **3, 1867** and on November **2, 1867** was ordained **elder--the** first native Presbyterian elder to receive ordination. Nang Esther is still alive at the age of eighty-four, having outlived her four children but honored and cared for by over a hundred grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was the first woman convert and the oldest, living Protestant Christian in Siam. (McFarland 1928:45-46)

[ Question 9. What do you think about the way these missionaries led the Thai to **Christ?**]

The response of missionaries. Nine missionaries responded to this question. All of them admired the way missionaries led the Thai to Christ, except one missionary who doubted the conversions of those two Thais. He questioned, "**Were** children raised in 'a Christian home really **Christians?**"

Most missionaries said that although this method was a tough one, it was probably the more effective way because they shared their lives together. One said:

The way these missionaries led the Thai to Christ was the harder but probably the more effective way. They chose to live together in a close way so that the Thai could see their lives and experience the Lord Jesus through them. We need more people today who will make this kind of long-term commitment to the Thai people.

Another missionary said that it was good because it opened more doors than any spoken words. She said:

I think that this type of ministry of serving and meeting the needs of orphans and the young children is an excellent way to share Christ with the Thai people. Serving and love always open more doors than any spoken presentation of the gospel, especially true of the time period in which this people were attempting to have their ministry when the Thai people in general were much more closed to the gospel.

Readers can see the **impact** on Esther's life, because she also did the same thing with her own offspring. One missionary shared, "**Esther** obviously made a deep impression on people as shown by the love given to **her.**"

Another missionary respondent saw that commitment of missionaries reflects Christ's love. If the Thai see Christ in the lives of missionaries, the Thai seem to come closer to Christ. He said, "They knew that in order for the Thai to believe, they must see Christ in the lives of missionaries. They showed the Thai their love and commitment which drew the Thai to Christ, I am sure."

Another one added, "Sharing your life, actually living together is a great way. Jesus chose to spend the majority of his three year ministry with his disciples, living, eating, sharing life together. Jesus lived and died for relationships."

But one of them cautioned about **missionaries'** motives and commitment. He said, "**Though** this is a good method because it demonstrates love, anyhow, if we do this with good motives and unchanged commitment, the Thai would see it clearly."

The last two missionaries mentioned that Christians should pay attention to the poor, to orphans, and lower class people instead of the nobles, the king, and Thai officials only. One said, "**God** seems to choose children, orphans, the poor, the destitute, lower classes more often than he chooses the noble, the high, and lofty (I Corinthians 1)." Another added, "I

wish the church **would** remember its humble origins in the lives of these people."

The response of Christians. **Thirty-four** Thai Christians wholeheartedly agreed with the methods used by missionaries. **They** saw a meek approach by missionaries who sacrificed for Thai children. The missionaries were patient and used relationships to show their own lifestyles in a natural way. One said, **"I** think that missionaries provided help and opportunity in a sincere way for those two children. Help came at the right time for the right person and brought good and lasting **results.**" Another Christian observed, **"Missionaries** saw true Christians come from their ministries."

There are, however, many factors which missionaries need to be aware of. A Christian respondent suggested, **"Some** of the Thai would think that missionaries bought the children from their **parents.**" Another added:

Mass production of this kind of ministry forces missionaries to set rules and regulations for the children. **If** this is the case, the genuine relationship in the family **turns** to become a boarding school. Thus, the ratio of teachers and students is important. Christian schools fail to duplicate the maximum results of the past missionaries because they apply the ministry to mass **production.**

One commented, "It is not easy to treat adopted children as **one's** own. If the situation is not handled well, the Thai would think that missionaries look down upon the Thai children."

The response of Buddhists. Fourteen Buddhist respondents answered the question. All of them said that this method is far better than any other because it shows the meekness of missionaries, and allows a longer time to grow the seed. It always brings forth fruits. One said, "This

demonstrated love and sacrifices. People would ask why missionaries have to do this. Surely, the Thai would see a deeper love of missionaries into the realm of the divine by themselves." Another Buddhist added, "It was good and brought more fruit to missionaries. It was a life-giving ministry. It demonstrated a gentle way to deal with **children.**" Another confirmed, "I do not think of conversion because they must become Christians for sure in the future."

Buddhists see a number of limits to this ministry. They said that we cannot do this kind of ministry in mass production. And missionaries cannot do this to all children. Each case must be considered separately. Grownup **children** may not bring such good results as small ones. A Buddhist said, "It is good, but it has a limit because missionaries cannot accept many **children.**" One added, "It is impossible to accept all children, though the need is great. I think that the smaller the children are, the better the result is."

#### General conclusion of responses of all three groups to incident 8.

Missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists agreed wholeheartedly with the methods used by missionaries. This strategy was profitable because: (1) it served as vehicle to show love, commitment, and pure motives, (2) it created bonding because they lived together, and (3) the method demonstrated the power of God's love through life.

Thai Christians suggested a weakness on the other side of the coin. Some Thais may think that missionaries bought the children as slaves and

used them to serve missionaries. The mass production of this ministry can destroy its **beauty**.

9. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to the Ninth Incident

The Ninth Incident (M = Missionary. W = Woman)

The ninth incident was recorded by Dr. Kosuke **Koyama**, a Japanese missionary to Thailand during **1960-1968**. The incident was a conversation between a missionary and a woman who lived in the **northern** part of Thailand.

The woman had suffered from cancer. After reading the incident, I hope you will say from your viewpoint what was the expectation of the woman from the missionary.

M. How are you today? I have come to visit you hoping that I may talk with you a few minutes about Christian religion.

W. I feel neither well or bad. If you want to **tell** me of your **Dharma**, you are a teacher of religion, aren't you? Go ahead.

M. Yes, I am a teacher of the Christian religion. This book I have in my hands is the Scripture. Just as the **Tripitaka** is very important to Buddhism, this book is very important for us. There is a prayer, quite short and concise in the Scripture. The name of **it** is the Lord's prayer.

W. Just a minute. I am a north Thai woman. Speak to me in the **northern** dialect. You said you are a teacher of religion, didn't you? How can anyone be a teacher of religion unless he is at home with the language of the people? Speak to me in the **northern** dialect, I am tired of your poor **Thai**. . .

M. I am sorry. I can speak only the Bangkok **Thai**. . .

W. I thought so. You cannot! I don't like people like you. You missionaries are always trying to teach people while you really do not understand the **people**. The Buddhist monks are much better than you missionaries. I will call in a monk right now. I will listen to him. He will understand me. He can comfort me with his **Dharma**. He can speak my own language. You are wasting you time here. Go home. (Koyama 1974:89-90)

[Question 10. After reading the **incident**, what was the expectation of the woman from the missionary in your **viewpoint?**]

The response of missionaries. Eleven missionaries answered **concerning** the ninth incident. Six missionaries were positive while five of them suggested other directions. All six of them agreed that the requirement of the woman placed on the missionary was a heavy one but does have some truth in it. All missionary respondents should **learn** the native language of the people to whom they are trying to minister. One said:

If this missionary was particularly targeting a group which had its own dialect and if the woman in the incident truly represented the feelings of most of the **northern** people, then the missionary by **all** means should have worked hard to be able to speak **northern** Thai.

Another mentioned, "I think the lady had a right to expect this of the **missionary**." One added:

Missionaries believed that her expectation or requirement was legitimate and correct in her point of view and that he for his own benefit should make every effort to **learn** the local dialect because it can be a powerful tool to demonstrate the level of commitment and love the missionary has toward the people.

All five missionaries who had other ideas also agreed that missionaries should speak the language of the people to whom they minister. One missionary said, The woman was using an excuse." The

other suggested, "**She** probably just was not interested in talking to the **missionary.**" The third one said, "**God** had not chosen this lady to be saved, for those whom God chose must repent and **believe.**" Another two added, "Perhaps her neighbors were more open to the gospel and ready to listen even to broken **Thai.**"

The response of Christians. **Forty-three** Thai Christians responded. Thirty-nine of them agreed with the majority of missionary responses. The woman required local language proficiency from the missionary because she wanted the missionary to understand her needs and feelings in a deep way which would lead to successful communication. One mentioned, "**She** seemed to be sure that without speaking the **northern** language, the missionary will not be able to cope, carry her burden and understand her ideas in a deep way. She wanted to consider the missionary as an insider, but she could not because the missionary could not speak her **language.**" Another mentioned, "Understanding ideas, feeling aches and pains, coping, caring, and encouraging require proficiency in using the local language."

Four Thai Christians expressed the same ideas as the five missionaries mentioned earlier. One added, "The woman wanted the missionary to come to a dead end street because she realized beforehand that the missionary could not speak the **northern** dialect." Another said, The woman did not want to hear the gospel and that was why she raised the language **matter.**"

The response of Buddhists. **Twenty-nine** Buddhists responded. How did the Thai Buddhists perceive this incident? Thai Buddhists understood that the woman needed gentle and encouraging words. She had a psychological need. A Buddhist **said**, "**She** needed persons in her own social network to visit and be **friends** so that she would feel comfortable in her **loneliness.**" Another Buddhist mentioned, "**She** needed understanding persons who knew how she felt, for she was weak. She felt irritated when she learned that the missionary could not speak her language. She knew unconsciously that the missionary might not be able to understand her feelings and her **situation.**"

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to incident 9. Buddhists saw the case through the woman's needs. Missionaries saw the woman's requests as requirements upon them. Thai Christians' answers shed light on how to **turn** missionaries into becoming insiders. Their viewpoints are different.

Missionaries perceived the case with analytical minds. They were able to say the woman's request was correct and why it was right. Thai Christians suggested that if missionaries are proficient in the language, this may serve as the door to do indigenous ministry to touch the hearts of the Thai and to know Thai culture and Buddhism. They all agreed that proficiency in using Thai language is related to the efficiency of missionaries' ministry to the deepest needs of the Thai.

10. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and **Buddhists** to the Tenth Incident

The Tenth Incident

**H.R.H.** Prince Damrongrajanuparp, a son of King Rama IV (King Mongkut) wrote his observation about the work of American missionaries during Bradley's era. I hope you will give your viewpoint as to what Prince Oamrong's idea was when you listen to the work of missionaries in the present situation. **Prince** Damrong wrote:

Speaking from my own observation, the present work of the American missionaries in this country has prospered beyond comparison with the work of their pioneers. The reason appears to me to be this: that the missionaries, having lived long enough in Siam, have come to appreciate the character of her inhabitants, and have changed their methods to suit such character. Thus instead of abusing Buddhism as the first step to the extolling of Christianity, they set about to exhibit Christian virtue, and thus inspire faith in a religion which possesses such good points. Aggressive works have been abandoned in favor of a gentler method, and the **results** must surely be more satisfactory from the missionary view-point. Whereas in the opinion of a contemporary foreign observer, the missionaries could not produce one good Siamese convert for every **10,000** pounds they spent sixty years ago, I imagine the present volume will show that such is very far from being the case today. (McFarland 1928:14-15)

[ Question **11.** Please tell me, what do you think about Prince Damrong's idea when you listen to the work of missionaries in the present **situation?**]

The response of missionaries. Sixteen missionaries answered.

Thirteen of them agreed with Prince Damrong, and only three missionaries did not agree.

Those thirteen missionaries mentioned that they all agreed wholeheartedly. Prince Damrong's observation was correct and appeared

to show that **missionaries** in his time had come to realize that a more sensitive approach to the **Thai** people and Thai culture was preferable to the confrontive approach of earlier years. One of them said:

Prince **Damrong's** observations appear to show that missionaries in his time had come to realize that a more sensitive approach to the **Thai** people and their culture was more preferable than the confrontive approach of earlier years. Although every missionary is **different**, I think that this is the basic approach of missionaries today. His suggestion that because of the gentler approach there will be more Thai Christians appears a bit optimistic. Nevertheless missionaries today seem less likely to offend the Thai than those that first came.

Another missionary respondent suggested, "I think he is right, a gentler, kinder approach is bound to be more **effective**."

Another missionary responded:

I agree wholeheartedly. Fruit does not come from strenuous effort, but from the Holy Spirit. Some strategies bring a greater possibility of success. They are: (1) appreciate the people and **learn** more from them, (2) Change methods used by adapting to the needs of the people. Remember that principles remain the same, but applications change accordingly, (3) Exhibit character by showing them Christ in your life, and (4) Use gentler approaches.

Many of them said that missionaries at present become more culturally sensitive and less abrasive. They are against abusing Buddhism.

One advised:

My impression is that missionaries become more culturally sensitive and less abrasive as they have come to know and love the Thai. It is only a small step forward though with a lot yet to **learn**. I wish we had made more progress in this area.

Another missionary suggested:

I am against abusing Buddhism or any other religious or value system in order to present Christianity in a good light. The

Christian message is **"good news"** indeed which can stand on its own truth claims without attacking that of another.

Some missionaries in Thailand at present are not like Bradley, but their aggressive attitudes demonstrate differently from Bradley's. One said:

This is true in today's world. Some missionaries are not like **Bradley**. They have a different type of aggressive attitudes (**e.g.**, they approach unknown Buddhists and share the gospel and try to persuade them to accept Christ without asking them whether they understand clearly enough or they do not care for the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the hearers' **lives.**).

But some missionaries still maintain their conclusions that many missionaries today are overly aggressive. He said, **"I** am impressed by Prince **Damrong's article**. Unfortunately, **I** think many missionaries today are overly aggressive and exhibit narrow thinking about the Thai mentality."

Many of them do not know how to witness effectively. They know they have to be gentler. But in actual practice, they do not know how to perform an effective Christian witness. One added, **"We** have a lot of questions, but no answers, only more questions. We need to work towards some answers **together.**" Another commented: **"Missionaries** need to struggle deeper with questions about: **(1)** How can **I** be a Thai and a Christian at the same time? **(2)** What would Jesus be like if he lived his life as a Thai? **(3)** What **is** the essence of the **gospel?**"

Another missionary respondent said, "Prince Damrong is correct. He saw that the missionary needed to **contextualize** the **gospel.**"

Those who did not agree said that the method used by the past missionaries had been gentle already. By this, they mean **"syncretistically."**

If they use a **"gentler"** method, it is not good. The end result depends on the grace and the sovereignty of the Lord, not our gentler method. One of them said:

We can only hope that many do come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. The end result will be by the sovereign grace of the Lord. "Gentler?" Has it already been so "gentle" [syncretistic] that the word of the gospel of truth has given way to the relationships which all too often take priority over every thing.

The last missionary had many doubts. He asked many questions. He understood that "abusing Buddhism" means telling Buddhists that "Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He said:

Where is the proof? Where are the thousands coming to Christ if what he says is true? Where is this **"volume?"** Is it "abusing Buddhism" to say "Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father, but by me?" Are we being faithful to the gospel, if we never mention all the prohibitions of idolatry in the Old Testament? There are 29 in Deuteronomy alone. No. God is sovereign. Compromising the gospel leads to spiritual aberrations.

The response of Christians. Fifty-four Thai Christians were interviewed. Forty-three agreed with Prince Damrong. Only one Thai Christian minister in the north questioned the politeness of the Thai. **"The Thai at the present," she noted, "are westernized to do things like Westerners. They are quick to do things. Because of that, I am not quite sure if the Thai are still polite."**

However, forty-three Thai Christians agreed that the demonstration of meekness of missionaries and Thai Christians will always bring good

results. They provided a number of word choices as clues to demonstrate meekness. One said:

There are a number of word choices which demonstrate meekness such as soft and smooth in surface approach (**Numnuon**), touch the hearts of the people approach (**Taeh Jai**), do not break generosity and sincerity of Thai Buddhists (**Hak Ham Nam Jai**), but slowly and smoothly move into their hearts by using a longer time (**KoiPen Koi Pai**), and words that honor the Thai Buddhists (**Hai Kieŋ**).

They said that these approaches will bring good results and that Thai Buddhists will open their minds and hearts to hear the missionaries' sayings. They provided reasons why these suggested methods will be workable in Thailand. A Christian said:

The Thai are polite and meek people in general. They do not appreciate aggressive methods and a head-on approach. Opposing forces may occur in **cross-cultural** communication but are unnecessary. When the Thai oppose missionaries, the missionaries usually do not know it because the Thai keep negative expressions of their thoughts to themselves and only express the positive.

This is called the "**Thai escape mechanism.**" Their hearts close and will not allow the gospel to penetrate. Another Christian respondent said:

There is no need to use a great deal of money when working with the Thai. Missionaries should **learn** and practice how to explain things. Most of them are straightforward and right to the point. The Thai love to **hear** the truth, not in a direct way, but **Pood Omm Omm** (not straightforwardly). They do not want to hear anything straightforwardly because their feelings or emotions will block their cognitive domain in perceiving the truth. **Pood Omm Omm** will help them to think by themselves and come to the conclusions on their own.

But another said, The Thai love to hear the gospel. Missionaries can share with the Thai as **directly** as they can, if they develop rapport with them."

They suggested further that missionaries and Thai Christians should study seriously about Thai culture, customs, habits, society, and Thai ways of helping them to listen to the truth. For them, religion is felt, not rationalized. Love of friendship always serves as a bridge to carry the truth. One Christian suggested:

**I learned** that missionaries who came to this country have to spend many thousands of dollars to study Thai language for two years. They have to work hard so that they can pass grade six's examination (*Por Hook*). But they do not put themselves in equal investment of their money and energy to the heart of the **subject--** culture and Buddhism. Well, I know they studied some, but I mean, they should really study in-depth so that they pass the gospel effectively. Missionaries should study seriously about Thai culture, customs, habits, society, **worldview** and values.

The response of Buddhists. All Thai Buddhists agreed wholeheartedly with Prince Damrong. They mentioned that the first impression they perceive is the most important. One said:

If the first impressions are good and friendly, some mistakes by missionaries in later years can be pardoned and forgotten. However, if the first impression is not good though missionaries perform many good things, they will not accept them easily.

Another commented, Thai people are keen in observing other people. They realize that the present missionaries are very clever and **learn** to adjust their strategies in a good way. Thus they have hope that one day the gospel will spread to wider **areas.**" A few people wondered why some

**missionaries** can not perceive the problem and continue to use aggressive evangelization in Thailand. A Buddhist added:

We are not against **Christianity**, but some Christians and missionaries did many disturbing things from time to time. I know that they want us to know something. But the problem is that they need to know how to pass religious information to us. I do not know what has kept them from using **alternatives** methods.

General conclusion of the responses of all three **groups** to incident

10. All Buddhists and the majority of missionary and Thai Christian respondents agreed with Prince Damrong. Buddhists suggested that the first impression of Christian witness is the most important. If missionaries and Christians witness to the Thai aggressively at first, it may be difficult to develop a relationship in later times.

Missionaries did not share how they can demonstrate in a gentler **method**, but Thai Christians are able to provide clues with **five** to six elements in the meekness approach. Some of them are afraid that this gentler method may be involved with syncretism.

A Summary Conclusion of the Responses of All Groups to Incidents 1-10

This section is **concerned** with a summary conclusion of the responses of missionaries, Christians, and Buddhists toward incidents 1-10. It consists of four parts: (1) views **concerning** aggressiveness of pioneer missionaries, (2) the cause of aggressiveness, (3) the cure for aggressiveness, and (4) general observations toward the Christian witness of pioneer missionaries.

# 1. Views Concerning Aggressiveness of Pioneer Missionaries

The majority of all three groups agree that **Bradley's** ministry was aggressive and the ministries of House, Mattoon, and Caswell were meek. The **respondents** observed their Christian witness and the results appeared in the incidents. Almost **all** respondents in all three groups agreed with Prince Damrong in the tenth incident that instead of abusing Buddhism as the first step to extolling of Christianity, missionaries set about to exhibit Christian virtue, and thus inspire faith in a religion which possesses such good points.

Missionaries mentioned that any Christian witness which demonstrates confrontation, **negative** statements, **insensitivity**, boldness, offensiveness to hearers, attack against authorities, especially Buddhist monks, and cause the loss of their face are called aggressive.

Thai Christians said that any Christian witness which makes the Thai **feel** that missionaries and Christians are ungrateful, disrespectful, disparaging of the Thai as a whole, too direct, or cause the Thai to feel pain in their hearts is considered aggressive.

Buddhists' ideas are the same as Christians, but they add that: **(1)** any activities that look down upon the Thai and demand a change without a clear explanation are perceived as aggressive, **(2)** they feel that missionaries are outsiders and should reserve their expression **concerning** religious matters in Thai society.

It should be observed that missionaries expressed their ideas objectively while Thai Christians used subjective feelings to judge their Christian witness. Buddhists used both, but added two more valuable things which missionaries should **learn** from **them**. (see page **164**, 169, 170)

## 2. The Cause of Aggressiveness

The majority of all three groups mentioned the same three factors which caused missionaries to demonstrate aggressiveness in Christian witness. First is missionaries' lack of knowledge about Thai culture and Buddhism. They expressed attitudes toward Buddhism which were not appropriate. Missionaries understood that Bradley's Christian witness was aggressive because he did not see any benefits in studying Buddhism. Christians shared that being an outsider and failing to study Thai culture caused missionaries not to understand Thai people. Buddhists saw Bradley as an outsider. Outsiders do not know Thai culture.

Second, missionaries said that pioneer missionaries were interested only in principles, taking dogmatic stands, declaring right or wrong in doctrines, and proclaiming religious information. They saw the Thai as prospects to be converted to Christ, not as persons with whom to develop relationships or to care about. The lack of genuine relationships hinders the acquisition of knowledge from the local context which missionaries need as raw materials to build a communication bridge so that the gospel message will move into Thai hearts.

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Thai Christians shared that the result of the lack of knowledge about Thai culture and Buddhism rendered missionaries oblivious to factors such as the felt needs of the Thai, their way of gaining religious knowledge, and how to select and witness to a target group. Buddhists felt that as long as missionaries are outsiders and do not know who the Thai are, they cannot find appropriate words to relate to them. The lack of this knowledge caused missionaries to speak and act inappropriately. Although they did not intend to be aggressive in Christian witness, the Thai perceived **it** as aggressive because of the Thai value of meekness.

**Third**, missionaries and Thai Christians saw that pioneer missionaries did not consider time as a major factor. They shared the gospel in a short period of time while the Thai required a longer time because they want to observe **missionaries'** lives and make their own decision about whether or not to accept Christ.

The following are factors that the three groups saw differently regarding the cause of aggressiveness. Missionaries observed that pioneer missionaries were **concerned** with only their agendas and duties related to preaching the gospel. They had zeal and feared nothing. Because of this, their ministries produced harsh words. How can Christians maintain their zeal and at the same time produce soft words to lead Buddhists to Christ? They said that incarnational ministries that touch the deepest needs of local people would exert a greater impact for a longer period of time on the Thai. This, in **turn**, generates a genuine relationship which helps missionaries to

share the gospel with the Thai. This can be seen in the seventh incident.

Missionaries shared that any ministries that reflect **Christ's** love through missionary lives seemed to produce a long-term effect upon the **Thai**.

Missionaries observed that incidents **1-10** do not mention the **role** of the Holy Spirit. They said that only the Holy Spirit draws people to Christ, not just soft words and good acts of missionaries.

Christians saw that the theology of missionaries played an important role, enabling some to have a more open and positive attitude toward Thai culture and Buddhism, while others were negative and condemning. Bradley had a bad attitude toward Buddhism while House, Mattoon, and Caswell did not do as Bradley did. Is it possible that the theology of these missionaries played an important role in their attitudes toward local religion? From the incidents Christians observed that positive attitudes toward Buddhism yielded fruit while negative attitudes made the Thai close their hearts toward the gospel. That is why they felt that missionaries forced the gospel into their lives.

Lack of proficiency in using local language prevented missionaries from knowing the needs of the Thai, understanding their feelings, and identifying with their suffering. This caused missionaries to be outsiders all the time. As outsiders, their words and actions always appear aggressive to local people. Thai people are keen to observe people's lives. Missionaries want to present the gospel in words while the Thai want to first **learn** the gospel from **missionaries'** lives. Aggressive words and inappropriate acts

which follow good ethical lifestyles always destroy **missionaries'** credibility.

The Thai wanted missionaries to speak less straightforwardly (*Pood Omm Omm*) and then let them seek their own conclusions about the gospel truth by themselves. Thai Christians mentioned that selecting an appropriate target group is important in Christian witness in Thailand.

Buddhists suggested that the lack of cultural and religious knowledge unconsciously led missionaries to use their own cultures as the only standard to judge others. The Thai saw that missionaries who are outsiders and are ethnocentric have pride. Preaching words with strangers and using strong words to the Thai are considered by Buddhists as lack of love.

### 3. The Cure for Aggressiveness

Missionaries seemed to agree with Prince Damrong in the tenth incident about the gentler method, but they could not tell what gentler methods look **like**. They admitted that the present missionaries do not use aggressive words as Bradley did. Because missionaries lack knowledge about gentler methods, it causes me to wonder whether or not present missionaries still hold aggressive attitudes toward Buddhism and Thai culture. Because Thailand always maintains a low percentage of Christian conversion, I suspect that their lack of knowing gentler methods may cause them to use different forms of aggressive words and acts from those of the pioneer missionaries. Chapter 5 will give more details about this issue. Missionaries suggested that pioneer missionaries who love the Lord and the Thai, like Bradley may nevertheless lack human understanding and may

refuse to study **seriously** Thai culture. This may lead them to encounter a series of failures in their Christian witness in Thailand.

Thai Christians suggested that holistic ministry **fits** wth Thai culture. Social responsibility can serve as a bridge to bring **love**, help, and benefits to touch the hearts of the Thai. **It** generates opportunities to share **Christ's** love through the good life as well as the good words of Jesus which naturally fit the Thai mentality in studying religions. Bradley carried with him both elements. Bradley's devotion to Christ as a "**man for others**" led many Thais closer to Christ but at the same time, his evangelistic words pushed them far away from Christ. The Thai felt confused. Readers can see this mixed behavior of Bradley in Chapter 3.

Thai Christians shared that the role and status of missionaries is important in Thai society. **Incarnational** ministries require missionaries to take appropriate roles and status in Thai culture. Missionaries' roles and status coupled wth their proficiency in Thai language and their knowledge of Thai culture would lead them to know the Thai and their needs. This helps missionaries to **develop** long term, genuine relationships with the Thai, and help them present the gospel as a help and benefit to their needs. Any Christian witness which flows along **cultural** circuits and does not offend people for the wrong reasons may lead the Thai to Christ.

Christians pointed out that incamational ministries which reveal the needs of the people serve as **two-edged** swords. It is **tragic** for missionaries who come to know the needs of the people but do not commit to help those

who are in need. It is understandable however, that even committed missionaries can not fulfill all the peoples' needs.

Buddhists suggested that good religion should produce a good life. Through **Buddhists'** perspectives, to be patient and not easily angered are considered elements of a good life. Sacrificially helping people who are in need, and developing a gentle and grateful relationships are considered good. The ministries of House and Mattoon were meek because they applied soft, kind acts, and gentle behavior to those weak vessels who were in need. They ministered to Nai Naa and Nang Esther gently for a long period of time. They held an **appropriate** status and continually met their physical and psychological needs for many years. They did not perform their ministries as mass production. Buddhists saw that life-giving ministries are always workable. They do not generate enemies but have a strong impact on Thai Buddhists.

#### 4. General Observations Toward Christian Witness of Pioneer Missionaries

Missionaries cautioned that applying **modern** science in rural areas might cause Buddhists to equate the power of modern medicine with the power of shamans. Secondly, missionaries who raise Thai children as the Houses and the Mattoons may be misunderstood by local people (e.g. missionaries bought Thai children to be used as servants in their families). Chapter 3 shows that the power of modern medicine went beyond comparison with the ministries of shamans. Time will be the only factor that proves the sincerity and love of missionaries.

Thai Christians suggested that the needs of the context tempt **missionaries** to do their ministry as mass production. In some cases, mass production quenches the genuineness of the ministry unless missionaries have enough manpower to carry on responding to each need. Thai Christians also observed that missionaries could not detect real seekers from false seekers. When the Thai eagerly accepted **Bradley's** tracts or listened to the **gospel**, this did not always mean that they were interested in the gospel. **Insiders** could **tell that**, but outsiders could not.

Buddhists suggested that missionaries should sit down and think carefully about words used in Christian witness. They should not speak of anything about which they do not have a deep understanding. They should first study and study thoroughly. Missionaries should seek an acceptable method to address Buddhists, not rely on their own methods. First impressions are important for all missionaries and they should find an appropriate time to share about Christianity. Figure 3 represents major factors in Christian witness gained by the interview research on incidents 1-10. It should be noted that the interview research in this chapter adds: (1) the ten elements to the meek **approach--lifestyles** of gospel communicators, (2) details of Christian witness in a number of major elements of the meek approach in Christian witness. Figure 3 also confirms that the major elements of the meek approach found in the historical research in Chapter 3 and the interview research discussed in this chapter are almost the same.

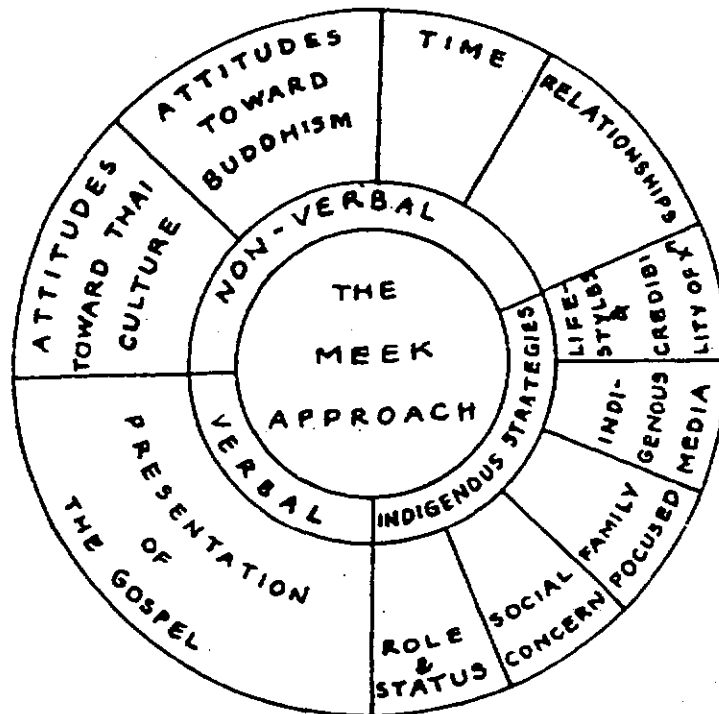


Figure 3

Major Factors in **Christian** Witness Shared by Missionaries, Thai  
 Christians, and Buddhists Gained by the Interview  
 Research Toward Incidents 1-10

### Summary

This chapter is concerned with the results of the **interview** research responded to by missionaries, Thai **Christians**, and Buddhists toward incidents 1-10. The research provides all major elements as found in Chapter 3 except family focused and indigenous strategies, but **ft** adds the

tenth major element of the meek approach in Christian ~~witness--lifestyle~~ of gospel communicators. The interview research also provides numerous details of various major **elements** in the meek approach in Christian witness.

The majority of missionaries, Thai Christians, and all Buddhists agreed that **Bradley's** ministries appearing in incidents 1-5 were aggressive and the ministries of House, **Mattoon**, and Caswell which appeared in incidents 6-8 were meek. They all agreed with Prince **Damrong's** idea in the tenth incident. The uniqueness of the interview research in this chapter is that it provides a number of concrete ways in utilizing those major elements of the meek approach in Christian witness.

## CHAPTER 5

### Voices From the Womb of Thailand

#### A Monkey and a Durian

**Durian** is a well known tropical fruit in southeast Asia, especially in Thailand. Its yellow meat has a strong odor and is delicious for durian eaters. It costs five dollars a piece in Thailand and perhaps 50 dollars in the **United States**. It is tricky to peel a durian because it does not show any obvious peeling directions from outside. It has numerous **thorns** on its surface. Those **thorns** are big, strong, and very sharp which can be harmful to those who do not know how to peel it. It is almost impossible to open it when it is raw. Without interviewing or seeing local people peel it, outsiders are almost hopeless, frustrated, and discouraged. An inexperienced outsider may get hurt from those sharp **thorns**, if he or she tries to peel it. Durian also has its own weakness. An insider who slips a small knife along the inner weak grains always touches **durian's** weakness, and in **turn**, opens it easily.

Monkeys can peel many kinds of fruit, but not durian. The one who tries to "**manifest destiny**" a durian by peeling them, always gets many cuts, gets hurt, discouraged, and frustrated, and feels awkward.

A durian is a Buddhist. Peeling the skin of a durian represents opening the hearts and minds of Buddhists to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Missionaries and Thai Christians are the ones who want to peel it. If durians were Buddhists, interviewing them would shed light **concerning**

where the grains of Buddhists' hearts are. Interviewing those missionaries and Thai Christians would also help us to **learn** from them about the problems and the promises in Christian witness in **Thailand**.

This chapter contains summary findings of the interview results of **missionaries**, Thai Christians, and Buddhists with regard to five **open-ended** questions listed as A-E. Table 3 shows that 28 **Western missionaries**, 73 Thai Christians, and 56 Thai Buddhists participated in answering some of the five interview questions. The interview process was the same as that in Chapter 4. The interviews discussed in Chapter 1 **with** missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists in Thailand were carried out according to plan. This chapter presents the **results** of those interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the real situation of the Christian witness in Thailand. I interviewed those same three groups at the same time and places as mentioned in Chapter 4. Twenty-eight missionaries, 73 Christians, 56 Buddhists responded to five open-ended questions (questions A-E). The groups are **Western** missionaries, Thai Christians, and Thai Buddhists in that order.

Table 3

The Number of Interview Respondents to Questions **A - E**

<b>Interview</b> Questions	<b>Western Missionaries</b>	Thai Christians	Thai Buddhists
A	28	73	40
B	26	73	38
C	26	65	39
D	25	73	44
E	28	67	56
Total number of Respondents	28	73	56

**The** first inquiry (question A) for missionaries and Christians stated, "Tell me about your interest in and acceptance of the **gospel.**" For Buddhists, the inquiry **mentioned,** "Tell me about your interest in the **gospel.**"

The first inquiry (question A) has five questions (**A1-A5**). These questions seek to delineate factors that caused both missionaries and Christians in Thailand to accept Christ in their respective contexts and that caused Buddhists to decide not to believe in Christ after hearing the presentation of the gospel. These factors are: (1) what made them interested or not interested in the gospel, (2) what first caused them to be interested or not interested in Christianity, (3) what amount of time elapsed in each group before they began to understand the meaning of the gospel, (4) what made them hesitant to accept Christ at first, and (5) what were their sources in hearing the gospel.

The second inquiry (**question B**) **stated**, Tell me about your attitudes toward **Buddhism**" (for missionaries and Christians), and, Tell me about your attitudes toward **Christianity**" (for Buddhists).

The second inquiry (question B) attempts to discover the attitude of missionaries and Thai Christians toward Buddhism, and **Buddhists'** attitudes toward Christianity. Attitude controls behavior and words. It is assumed that correct attitudes bring a better result in **cross-cultural** communication. Negative feelings hinder perception of the true meanings of the gospel.

The third inquiry (question C) stated, Tell me about your attitudes toward Thai **culture.**" This inquiry seeks to know the attitudes of all three groups toward Thai culture. It is designed to discuss the extent of their understanding of Thai culture.

The third statement (statement C) has four questions for all three groups. They **deal** with the attitudes of missionaries and Thai Christians toward Thai culture and the response of Buddhists in the same matter. These questions are designed to measure understanding of and appreciation for Thai culture in regards to Christian witness.

The fourth inquiry (question D) mentioned, Tell me about your attitudes toward Jesus Christ, Christians, and missionaries." It aims to understand elements of favorable impressions and unfavorable impressions of **all** three groups toward Christ, missionaries, and Christians.

The fifth inquiry (question E) mentioned, Tell me about sharing Christian faith with the **Thai.**" This inquiry has seven questions for

missionaries, Thai Christians, and Thai Buddhists. They seek to know the present approach or methods used by missionaries and Christians. For Buddhists, the fifth inquiry mentioned, **"Tell** me about a Christian sharing Christian faith with the **Thai."**

#### General Response to Interview Questions A-E

This section contains summary findings of interview results of the **three** groups **with** regard to questions A-E . The groups are missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists in that order.

#### A. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question A

[Question A: Tell me about your interest in and acceptance of the gospel (for missionaries and Thai **Christians**).]

[Question A: Tell me about your interest in the gospel (for **Buddhists**).]

#### The response of missionaries to **question A1**.

[Question **A1**: What first impressed you to be interested or not interested in **Christianity**?]

Eighty percent of the missionaries were reared in Christian homes.

They went to church and studied the Bible all of their lives. When they became 12-16 years of age, they encountered **the** truth by accepting Christ because revivalists came to their churches or because they went **to** a retreat or because they were impressed with Christian lifestyles.

Missionaries **who** came to know Christ because of Christian lifestyles said they observed Christian lives of close relatives or friends for a period of time. One added, The main influence of my conversion was my older sister.

I married a nominal Christian. He spent a lot of money and always came home very late. We had had a lot of family problems for many years. I came to know real Christians at a church. They were very happy persons. I decide to read the Bible and started praying to God to help me out of my family problem. I began to see things change in my own husband. I had a great peace and God answered my prayer.

A Christian confirmed, "When I was in high school, I went to visit my grandmother who was paralyzed at **Amphur Laplae**. Christians prayed for her healing. Three months later she arose and walked. I saw God's power and decided to believe in **him**."

The other 11 percent came to Christ because of problems in life that caused them to seek solutions. One Christian lady said:

I saw many good missionaries who were interested and cared for me. I asked myself why these people were **concerned** for me. One day my son was sick with his brain problem. I suffered emotionally and **turned myself** over to God. A Christian suggested to me to **pray**. When I started praying, I experienced a great peace and I decided to believe in him.

A Christian lady shared how God sustained her life during her problems:

Three **tomadoes** of life struck me. My only son had a brain disease. I also had cancer, and my husband committed adultery. I was hopeless, bitter, ashamed, and extremely discouraged. My close friend brought me to a church. I saw Christians sing songs. They cared for me. I heard the gospel at that church and **turned** to Christ.

The rest came to Christ from listening to the preaching of the word of God, studying the Bible and being impressed by Christ's life and his peace and love.

The response of Buddhists to question A1.

[Question **A1**: What made you interested **or** not interested in the gospel and what is the reason you have not accepted the **gospel**?]

Fifty-six Buddhists responded to the interview questions. Half of them are interested in Christianity, and half are not. **Sixty-four** percent of those interested in Christianity mentioned that they like Christianity because it brings benefits and **help**, its teachings are applicable to daily problems, it provides love and warm fellowship. The remaining 36 percent of those interested provided various reasons, e.g., Christianity is a good religion and Christian lifestyles are impressive. One Buddhist said:

I like the teachings of Christianity. I do not know about the history of Christianity or of Jesus. But I am impressed by his teachings. When I suffered, it seemed to me that Buddha's **Dhamma** could not help me. I found that Jesus' teachings are very impressive and solved my problems. My faith in him increased.

A Buddhist respondent suggested:

I am interested in Christians' love and their lifestyles. I am not interested in their doctrines. I saw they loved one another. I do not pay attention to Christian wordings. I am impressed by Jesus' life, but not his coming to save us from sin.

However, 46 percent of those not interested indicated that Buddhism is a good religion, and that they have subscribed to Buddhism for a long period of time. Their ancestors and parents are Buddhists, and the teachings are clear in every detail. They suggested that Christianity has an obligation to prove to them why it is better than Buddhism. The rest said that the teaching of Christianity is not clear in their judgment. One said, "I was **born** and raised as a Buddhist. I buried my heart in Buddhism. I do not want

to turn my mind to other **religions.**" Another added, "I have my own religion, and I am happy with it. I want to follow my ancestors. I think I have my own foundation of faith." One of them argued:

I cannot understand how God can save us from our own sin. It is not reasonable and clear to me. If your God really exists, he must show himself to me. He should speak to me audibly. I want him to speak to me.

Twenty-five percent of those who were not interested in Christianity answered that their first impression of Christianity was not good. Some Christians they met were narrow minded, aggressive, forceful, looked down upon people, and interfered in the **internal** matters of other people. Their lifestyles were not to be respected, and they were stumbling blocks to many. A Buddhist commented, "I do not want to be a Christian because I met disrespectful Christians. Their lives are below my general ethical **standard.**" Another respondent added:

I am not interested in Christianity. Many Christians I met did not show respect to Buddhism. They looked down upon us and our **religion.** They liked to compare religions. The teachings of Christ are good, but the way they lived their lives was not generous and broad-minded as far as I am **concerned.**

A university professor in Bangkok suggested:

One of my family members became a Christian. But she always stepped into all the matters of my personal life. She interferes in my personal matters. I feel that she forces me to do things. When she speaks to me she always put religious words in her sentences. She does not consider my opinion, but rather compares it with the teachings of the Bible. All situations can be explained by her Bible. It is too much. I do not like it.

The rest said that the teachings of Christianity are impossible to understand, e.g., the miracles of Jesus, miraculous activities of the apostles.

Also the redemptive acts of Christ such as the **death**, blood and crucifixion of Jesus are frightening to Thai Buddhists.

General statement for the response of all three groups to question A1.

Three major factors caused missionaries and Thai Christians to come to know Christ. They were: **(1) Christians'** lifestyles, (2) answers to prayer when they encountered crises and **problems**, and (3) hearing the word of God.

Missionaries and Thai Christians were different in two major areas: **(1)** missionaries were reared in Christian families and came to know Christ during their youth, but the Thai were not; (2) missionaries were afraid of hell and of God not accepting them, while the Thai were fearful of ghosts.

Factors that brought Buddhists to Christ were tangible and **"this-worldly."** Factors that kept them far from Christ were **concerned** with **"people"--social** networks and disrespectful Christian lifestyles.

The Response of Missionaries, Thai **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question

**A2**

[Question A2: Was there anything that made you hesitant to come to know Christ at **first?**]

The response of missionaries to question A2. Ninety-five percent of the missionaries mentioned that nothing made them hesitant to accept Christ at the first opportunity. Those who were not from Christian families mentioned that they could not believe in Christ because they thought they had to give up having fun, or did not want Christ to control their lives. One missionary said, **"I** was hesitant to give Christ total control of my life. This

kept me from becoming a **Christian** until I was sixteen years old because I thought I would miss out on the fun things in **life.**" Another missionary respondent mentioned, "I was hesitant to surrender my will to Christ because I was afraid that he would make my life boring and that I would have to become a **missionary.**"

The response of Thai Christians to question A2. Seventy-six percent cited a number of factors that made them hesitant to accept Christ at first. These factors were: families, relatives, brothers, sisters, customs, Buddhism, school friends, and the idea that Christianity is the religion of the whites made them hesitant to come to Christ. One Christian said, "**My** parents and relatives made me hesitant to come to know Christ. My faith in Buddhism which my parents and ancestors put in me made me delay my faith in **God.**"

A Christian respondent added:

My friends in the university and my family are the cause. I study the arts and we have to work as a group. My friends drink liquor. If we believe in God and cannot drink liquor, they will not understand me. They will leave me alone. My parents also do not agree with me. They said that I should follow my ancestors.

Those respondents who thought Christianity is the religion of the whites said, "I always fight against my own feeling because I think that Christianity is the religion of **Farangs(Westerners).**"

The rest of the Thai Christians (24 percent) said that hindrances were ineffective sermons, bad behavior of some Christians, their own thinking, pride, ghosts, unanswered prayers, and shamefulness. A Christian commented, "I do not like the aggressive preaching of some Christians.

They use strong words to pin down the Buddhist faith **aggressively.**" Another respondent added:

Evil spirits tried hard in many ways to separate me from God. My job is to design idols. Someone asked me to design one of the biggest Buddha images. I accepted. I knew I would be a well known person and would be a millionaire. When I decided to refuse that job and thought about becoming a Christian, many of my professors **tuned** against me and hated me. Evil spirits often irritated me.

#### The **response** of Buddhists to question A2

[Question A2: What first impressed you to be interested or not to be interested in **Christianity?**]

When asked what first caused them to be interested or not interested in Christianity, almost all of them who were interested in Christianity said that the lifestyles of Christians played a very important role while only a few said that the teachings in the Bible were their first favorable impression. One Buddhist said, "I was impressed **with** Christian lives at Wattana Wittaya Academy [one of the most well known Christian girls' schools in Bangkok]. I have seen many good Christians here. Their lifestyles are very impressive to **me.**" Another Buddhist respondent commented:

A Christian family where I am living is very warm and loving. They have *Nam Jai* [gracious heart] for me, but at the same time they are not better than Buddhists I have known. I am very impressed, but not enough to cause me to change my religion.

Fifty percent of those who were not interested in Christianity said that culture, customs, and social networks were the first cause. One said, "My family members and my ancestors have not departed from Buddhism to trust

in any other religions. If I violate that **tradition, my** mother told me that she could not accept **that.**" Another one shared:

My parents have invested Buddhism in me for 30 years. Thai **culture** and customs, Buddhism, and even my parents give me freedom to **choose**, so how can I change from Buddhism to Christianity? It was firmly planted in me.

The other half mentioned miracles, the first sermon, a picture of the crucifixion, and explanations of Christians who used God to answer all kinds of situations which, for them, are not applicable and understandable in the present situation. A Buddhist respondent said, The miraculous birth of Jesus, for me, is impossible to believe. How can a virgin give birth to a **baby?"** Another one added:

I went to hear a sermon at a church for the first time. I do not like it much because I felt it was very boring although they jumped up and down actively and shouted their *Dharma*. It is like a *Pahi* [strategies for **selling** medicines in rural **areas**].

One confirmed:

I do not want to believe in Christianity because some Christians I met bring God to explain or answer all kinds of their life's situations. They call God's name when they are frightened. It does not fit the situation at all. What they said they could not prove. How can God help us in the time of crisis? I think it is our luck that helps, not God.

General statement for the response of all three groups to question A2.

Two major factors, cultural and religious, made each group hesitant to come to Christ. It should be noted that these two factors also create interest if we utilize them by presenting the gospel through these factors.

First, cultural factors such as customs, social networks, peer pressures are the first cause **for** the Thai Christians and Buddhists not

coming to Christ. Social pressures **promoted** and helped missionaries to come to Christ. For **missionaries**, giving up fun, being afraid of going to hell, and not being accepted by Christ seemed to be the major factors.

Second, religious factors that made Thai Christians and Buddhists hesitant to accept Christ are: **(1)** the method of witnessing of Christians, (2) fear of ghosts, (3) ineffective sermons. Those who are now missionaries, initially did not want Christ to control their lives.

It is very interesting to note that missionaries were from Christian families and the majority of the Thai were not. For some Buddhists, anything that sounds unreasonable, unintelligible, and does not fit their life situations prevents them from coming to Christ because they do not have any background in Christianity.

#### The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question A3

[Question A3: What caused you to make the decision to accept Christ as your personal Lord and **Savior?**]

The response of missionaries to question A3. Eighty percent mentioned that their families influenced their Christian lives. Lifestyles of brothers, sisters, and friends caused them to seek Christ. A missionary said, "My parents clearly explained to me about **God's** love through Jesus Christ and that through him, I could be saved from **sin**." Another said, "I was befriended by several girls my age who were Christians and they lived lives that reflected Christ's love. I wanted what they **had**." The remaining (20 percent) did not come from Christian families. They became Christians because of the influence of the Christian lives of their friends, Catholic

priests, etc. The way their parents reared them played an important role in leading them to know Christ. A leader of **a missionary** organization shared his experience:

This is very a difficult question to answer because there were so many different factors involved in my slow progress toward the cross, but the final thing that convinced me that **I** should **surrender** my life to Christ was visiting two university students for a few days. At that time **I** called myself a Christian. Through my time with them **I** began to realize that their lives were different from mine. They had real peace and joy (and the fruit of the Spirit) in their lives which **I** did not have. Immediately after my time with them, **I** came to the point of totally surrendering my life to Christ.

The response of Thai Christians to Question A3. Seventy-eight percent said that Christians' lifestyles, love, care, and **concern** caused them to come to Christ. Among these people, 48 percent said they experienced the power of God's words in a later time. A Christian lady in the **northern** part of Thailand said:

The longer **I** lived in a Christian home, the more **I** knew Christ was with my host family. **I** touched Christ's love there. They loved to take care of and serve strangers. They conversed with this one and that one and ended up in eating food together. First, **I** wondered how they could do that. They were **concerned** for new students who were not settled.

Another one said:

**I** heard the sermon and saw their lives. They showed to me their love and they care for one another. It is the picture which **I** longed for, and **I** wanted to be a part of that **community**. Since then, **I** have never missed church, and **I** accepted Christ as my Savior.

Fifteen percent did not answer this question. Only seven percent said they just wanted to test God. One Christian added, "**I** think of Christ's teachings and a warm welcome at the church when crises visited me. **I**

tested God in my prayer and he answered **me.**" Another Christian professor in Bangkok shared his own experience, "**I** wanted to make an experiment in praying to God to see whether he would change my life in a better way.

Then **I** found that he revealed himself to **me.**"

#### The response of Buddhists to question A3

[Question A3: When did you hear about the **gospel?**]

This question will be answered together with question A5 for missionaries and Thai Christians.

#### General statement for the response of two **groups** to question A3.

There is one similarity that caused both groups to make the decision to accept **Christ--lifestyles** of Christian parents for missionaries and Christian friends for Thai Christians, and the power of the **gospel** which they heard in later years. For missionaries, the way their parents reared them played an important role in leading them to Christ.

#### The Response of Missionaries, Thai **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question

#### **A4**

[Question A4: From whom did you hear the **gospel?**]

The response of missionaries to question A4. The majority of respondents answered that lifestyles of members of their own families such as brothers and sisters caused them to come to Christ. Friends and religious leaders were the major influences in leading them to know Christ. One of them said, "**My** grandparents, parents, and different religious education teachers at Sunday school shared Christ with me." Another one said, "**I** think

that my **friends** and their lifestyles played a more important role than their **words.**"

The response of Thai Christians to **question A4.** Seventy-four percent of the Thai Christians interviewed heard the gospel from friends, teachers, families. One Christian said, "I heard the gospel from my teachers when I attended Friday **morning** chapel at Wattana **Wittaya Academy.**" The rest of them or 26 percent accepted God's words from missionaries, radio programs, evangelistic teams, and reading the Bible on their own. A young Christian said, "I heard the gospel from my friend who used to be a missionary to the Philippines. His life is entirely different from that of many people I met," while another mentioned, "I heard the good news from a radio station and from studying a correspondence course."

General statement for the response of two **groups** to question **A4.** Missionaries and Thai Christians agreed that they heard the gospel and became Christians because of relationships with **persons--Christian** families, friends, teachers.

It should be noted that these people were related to them in their daily lives. They had their appropriate and **recognized** roles and status in the society. Roles and status serve as a bridge to create relationships.

The Response of Missionaries. Thai **Christians.** and Buddhists to Question

A5

[Question A5: How long did it take for you to become **Christians?**]

The **response** of missionaries to Question A5. Twenty-four

missionaries answered this question. The average time for missionaries to come to know Christ was two years and four months. The shortest period for missionaries to come to know Christ was a couple of **days**, and the longest period was 10 **years**. One missionary said, "**It** took me a couple of days of really thinking about **it**." Another respondent added, "**When I** became a Christian **I** had heard the gospel for 10 years." One missionary remembered, "**I** accepted Christ when **I** was only nine years old. It took me only one year." Another missionary added:

**I** accepted Christ when **I** was **18** years old. So **I** would say it probably took from the time that **I** first really heard and understood the gospel at age six up to the time that **I** was **18**. **I** would say it took approximately 12 years.

It should be noted that the longer time of this missionary does not mean that he opposed Christ for 12 years, but rather his spiritual perception was not opened to understand the truth.

The response of Christians to question A5. Seventy-two Christians answered this question. The average time it takes Thai Christians to come to know Christ is four years. This is almost double the time for missionaries. One Thai Christian said, "It took me eight years after **I** heard the gospel." Another said, "For me, **I** sought God for ten years and it took me the last year

**seriously** before I accepted Christ." Another respondent **said, "I** heard the gospel in **1965** and accepted Christ in **1996**. It took me 23 years."

The **response** of Buddhists to **question A3**.

[Question A3: When did you hear about the **gospel**?]

Forty Buddhists who answered the last question were asked how long it had been since they had first heard the gospel. One Buddhists **said, "I** heard it from a radio program when I was seven or eight years **old."** Another added, **"I** heard the gospel when I studied at **Wattana Wittaya Academy."** A Buddhist respondent mentioned, **"I** studied a little from a comparative religion class when I was a pupil."

Those Buddhists who heard the gospel from their Christian friends mentioned that the process of hearing was not continuous because Christians did not seriously share the gospel with them. One said, **"I** heard about Christianity for many years, but it was not continuous. My Christian friends did not take time to sit down with me and explain it to me. They did not share their lives with me. Buddhists replied that they had retained their own religion for an average of **16** years after hearing the gospel.

General statement for the response of missionaries and Christians to **question A5** and of Buddhists to **question A3**. It should be observed that the average amount of time for Thai Christians between first hearing the gospel and accepting Christ is approximately double that of missionaries.

Thai Christians **seem** to require a longer time to be Christians. For Buddhists, they retained their own religion for an average of 16 years after hearing the gospel.

Most Buddhists who retained their faith in Buddhism encountered bad experiences in Christian witness at first. Many Buddhists heard the gospel when they were small children. The way they heard was not personal. Some heard from radio programs while others heard from teachers in **Christian** schools. Many Buddhists said that the ways they heard were not genuine and continuous. They heard and over heard the **gospel**, but they might not have understood **its** meaning.

General summary of the response of all three groups to questions A1.

A5. Missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists are influenced by two major factors in being led to or kept far away from Christ. They are **cultural** factors and religious factors. Both factors seemed to work positively in leading missionaries to Christ, but worked negatively for the Thai. These factors help me to see that the way American missionaries became Christians is entirely and in all aspects different from the Thai way.

Missionaries came to Christ because they grew up in good Christian homes. They met many godly people and they were impressed by their parents' lifestyles. The knowledge of Christ shaped their **worldviews** and prepared them to accept Christ. Fear of hell and not being accepted by Christ helped them to come to Him. The power of the words of God and

answers to their prayers were two more religious factors that helped them to come closer to Christ.

Thai Christians came to Christ in the same manners as missionaries. Thai Christians came to Christ because they met Christians and saw their lifestyles, God answered their prayers during crises in concrete ways, and they heard the words of God. They were hesitant to come to Christ because of pressure of social networks and peer groups. The data shows that Thai Christians needed approximately twice the time of missionaries in coming to Christ.

Buddhists, needed to overcome cultural and religious problems at the same time. Their parents, relatives, and social networks served as main cultural factors that prevented them from coming to Christ. The pressure would be decreased if Christians developed relationships with whole families at the same time rather than with individuals. The whole social network should receive care, **concern**, and love from the church. It is wise for missionaries and Thai Christians to contextualize the gospel and the word of God to provide answers to daily problems in concrete ways. Buddhists who had bad experiences in Christian witness or encountered high social pressure against them spent many years on average in holding their Buddhist faith. It should be noted that the first impression of their encounters with missionaries and Christians is very important. Ministries among children are urgently needed.

B. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to Question B & B1.

There is only one question (B & B1) for missionaries and Thai Christians. The question B & B1 are **similar**. Question B is more open-ended than **B1**. I prepared question B1 for those who do not understand question B. Three questions are prepared **for** Buddhists: B, B1, and B2. For Buddhists, question B is more **open-ended** than question **B2**.

[Question B for missionaries and Christians: Tell me **about** your attitudes toward Buddhism, or **B1**: What attitudes toward Buddhism should missionaries and Thai Christians **hold?**]

[Question B for Buddhists: Tell me about your attitudes toward Christianity, or **B1**: What is your present idea and attitude toward **Christianity?**]

[Question B2 for Buddhists: What attitudes toward Buddhism should missionaries and Thai Christians **hold?**]

The response of missionaries to **question B & B1**.

There were 26 interviewees for this question. Eight of them said that Buddhism is good while another **18** of them said Buddhism is not **good**.

Those eight missionaries who said that Buddhism is good mentioned that missionaries should try to understand the teachings of Buddhism in its pure form and in its popular expression and recognize the impact it has on Thai everyday life and culture. A missionary said, They **should** study Buddhism in its pure form and in its popular expressions; i.e. how villagers and town people perceive it, especially on issues such as suffering, and how to cope with **it.**" They said that Christians should never say anything bad about Buddhism but should show great respect. They agreed that they

should respect Buddha as a brilliant person in search of truth. They should understand that Buddhism does not come from evil; rather it helps society, and **its** presence is an aid to a number of social problems. A missionary **responded**, "**Buddhism** is not evil, but rather it contains some truths or general revelation. We should respect Buddhism while we should know that Christ is the only **way**."

Missionaries and Thai Christians should not laugh at or ridicule Buddhist beliefs. One respondent said, "**Missionaries** and Thai Christians should not laugh at their beliefs or ridicule as this is what they have believed since **birth**."

Buddhism portrays a good attempt to find life, and there are divine truths and general **revelation** in Buddhism. We should find contact points and pass the meaning of the gospel through those contact points. Although Christians respect Buddhism and Buddhists, they said Christians should know that Christ is the only way.

The majority of missionaries (80 percent) in Thailand said Buddhism is evil. They stated that the core of Buddhism is derived from evil. It serves as a hindrance in leading people to know the Lord. One missionary said:

Where does it say in the Bible that other religions are good? The Bible says it is **idolatry**, but some missionaries and Thai Christians are fooled into saying how wonderful Buddhism is as an ethical system. Religion is not primarily ethics, it is worship. The devil used Buddhism to guide men away from God.

Another added, "The Thai always say, '**All** religions are **good**,' or '**All** religions are the **same**,' or '**All** religions teach people to be **good**.' Buddhism

is diametrically opposed to the cross of Christ. It is a lie from Satan, a deception and a stumbling block to **Christianity.**"

The response of Christians to question B & B1. There were seventy-three Christians from a Buddhist background who answered this question. The majority of the Thai Christians or 80 percent mentioned the positive side of Buddhism and at the same time agreed on the inability of the teachings of Buddha to lead us to heaven. They said that the teachings of Buddha such as five precepts are good, but they have no power to help us do good. One of them mentioned, "**Buddhism** is one of the good religions, but it does not have any power to help us to do good. Its doctrines are also good, but it lacks energy to energize us to do **good.**"

The majority also see that Buddhism is a mixture of good and evil. The goodness of Buddhism is to help us do good, yet its badness is derived from Satan since it leads us to embrace the good, not the best, which is from **God**. Another Christian respondent added, "How can a good religion such as Buddhism be derived from Satan? The reason for this is that Buddhism directs us away from the best which is from **God.**"

Fourteen respondents considered that worshipping idols is from Satan. All of them said that we should not compare religions or took down upon them. Buddhism should serve as a stepping stone to present the gospel, not as a stumbling block. Christians should find good things in Buddhism and bridge the gap with concepts of Christianity. To deal with Buddhists, we have to show love over a long period of time, they concluded.

One added, "**Buddhism** is good in the ethical sense. **It** creates an intention to be a good person, but worshipping idols makes Buddhism **satanic**."

Another respondent commented, "**Worshipping** idols is from a satanic influence, but we can use it as stepping stones; **turn** them to worship the real **God**."

The response of Buddhists to question B & B1. What do Buddhists think of Christianity? There were thirty-eight Buddhists who answered this question. Twenty-two of them had good attitudes toward **Christianity**, but sixteen of them expressed unfavorable impressions. Buddhists see *Dharma* [truthful teaching] in Christianity. They appreciate the ethical standard, the teaching of Jesus. They mentioned all religions are good, and Christianity, as they understand it, is one of them. They seek to incorporate good things from all religions to make their lives better. They are aware of many things which are different, such as methods of propagating the religion and **organizational** structure. All twenty-two of them are interested in elements in Christianity that make people's lives good. Their minds are not geared toward the persons of Christ or Buddha but toward their ethical teachings. A Buddhist in Bangkok expressed the idea, "**I** admire ethical teachings of all religions including Christianity, but **I** do not myself believe on a person or stories in **religions**." A Buddhist interviewee added:

Christianity is a good religion and well organized. Organizations are systematically arranged. It stresses theories and ideas more than practical ways of living. They ask us to have faith only. They do not care of personal matters of hearers. All must flow in the same **pattern**. They apply heavily the psychological system.

Sixteen Buddhists mentioned many weaknesses which they see in **Christians**. For example, Christianity stresses the existence of God more than ethical teachings and behavior of humans. Christians always interpret Buddhist religious duties as evil and crooked by applying western standards for judgment. One devout Buddhist shared his idea:

Christians always judge Buddhists and Buddhism by using "faith in Christ" as a universal standard instead of using ethical teachings. They told me that if I do not believe in Christ, I will go to hell. But I told them that my life has never troubled or caused problems for any one. They confirmed that I surely would be doomed to hell. My personal opinion is that Christianity passes over and does not honor ethical men and women. It is like they look only for a certain logo of commercial products, not **its** quality or content. We respect and worship Buddha and monks because they sacrifice their lives highly. Thai culture encourages people to admire and respect good people so that they can do more good things. I saw that Thai people use **western** culture as a mean or vehicle to propagate Christianity in Thailand. They do not adjust their methods to fit the Thai culture. They look to those who **Wai** Buddha images as evil and **satanic**, but for us we remind ourselves not to sin **or** to be selfish and always do good. **If** Christianity is better than Buddhism, it should produce great missionaries and Thai Christians in all areas of life in Thai society to be examples for Buddhists. Now I see none.

Buddhists continued to share that Christianity is a narrow minded religion. A Buddhist shares her idea: "**Christians** invited a Buddhist to join their church in worshipping God on Sunday but would not join a Buddhist gathering in a Buddhist **temple**."

Finally, Buddhists are not impressed when they see Christians use God to solve **all** their problems. One added, "**They** praise God and bring God into their conversations all the time. Christians use God to solve all

kinds of problems. Sometimes **Christians** do not use common sense and reason to communicate with **Buddhists.**"

Regarding their present idea and attitude toward Christianity, thirty-two Buddhists answered. **Twenty-eight** have developed good attitudes toward Christianity by separating Christianity from Christians. They admire the ethical teachings of Jesus because they can understand without committing their lives to him though some of them do not admire Christians. They said that Christianity is the religion of **faith**, and Buddhism is the religion of reason.

The rest of them are not impressed by Christianity because it stresses **faith** in Christ more than ethical standards. For Christians, good things and bad things are determined by obedience to Christ, not the goodness of human beings. Christians pass over the righteousness of Buddhists and always ask Buddhists to consider heaven and hell in the Bible. Christians blame idolatry because they judge Buddhists from their own **perspectives**. **"We** do not worship **idols,**" the Buddhists said. **"We** respect Buddha and we **warn** ourselves to be good in all aspects of our lives." They suggested that when a Buddhist becomes a Christian, these new Christians use **Western** ways of propagating the gospel to Buddhists.

The response of Buddhists to question B2. When 38 Buddhists were asked what attitudes toward Buddhism missionaries and Thai Christians should hold, all of them provided two main areas that Christians need to consider. First, twelve of them mentioned that Christians should not

compare religions but should have good attitudes toward Buddhism, and should not look down upon them and their **religion**. A Buddhist respondent **said, "Christians** should not think that they are better than Buddhists. They have to be careful in using words. Wrong words can stick in **Buddhists'** hearts for a long period of time because we always think that Christians have to look down upon **others."**

Second, Christians should open their minds and embrace Buddhism more than they do. Buddhists and Christians should cooperate and share good things. "Please do not ignore, misunderstand, and deny Buddhism completely," one of them said.

General conclusion of responses for all three groups to question B.

Missionaries and Thai Christians expressed their theological concepts or ideas toward Buddhism, but Buddhists saw weaknesses of Christians and missionaries in their witnessing, not in the teachings in the Bible. Missionaries and Thai Christians saw Buddhism as a hindrance to the gospel, but Buddhists accepted the ethical teachings of Christ. They simply wanted Christians and missionaries to improve their witnessing to Buddhists.

The majority of missionaries said that Buddhism is from Satan. Most missionaries see Buddhism as a stumbling block to the gospel. They believe the devil uses Buddhism to guide the Thai away from God. Buddhism is opposed to the cross of Christ. Only eight out of 26

missionaries admired Buddhism. Both groups agreed that they should not say anything bad about Buddhism.

The majority of Christians mentioned that Buddhism is a mixture of good and evil. Buddhism's ethical systems and the teachings of Buddha are good. They suggested that this good part can be utilized as a stepping stone in Christian witness. Christians saw idol worshipping as satanic. Thai Christians and missionaries are the same in this matter.

The majority of Buddhists said that Christianity is good. Buddhists said that all religions are **good**. It should be noted that they may observe Christianity from their ethical point of view. They shared their ideas that Christians and missionaries should do the following in their Christian witness: **(1)** do not compare **religions**, **(2)** do not attack Buddhism with persuasiveness and narrow **mindedness**, **(3)** do not use God as solutions in all aspects of life in discussion with Buddhists, **(4)** use common sense, **(5)** be open-minded and study Buddhism seriously, **(6)** cooperate together as Buddhists and Christians in doing good things.

#### **C. The Response of Missionaries. Christians. and Buddhists to Question C**

[Question C: Tell me about your attitude toward Thai culture]

The response of missionaries to question C. Thirteen missionaries answered this open-ended question. Twelve missionaries admired many elements in Thai culture; only one was negative. Missionaries believed that culture can be either negative, neutral, or positive. They believed that every country or every culture has some of each quality. Some of the things they

appreciated about Thai people and Thai culture are **friendliness**, respect for elders and those in authority, and the importance the Thai place on friends.

A missionary shared his idea:

Some of the things that I appreciate about Thai people and Thai culture are their friendliness, their respect for elders and those in authority as well as the importance they place on friends and groups of friends and their willingness to share and help, just to name a few.

Most of them mentioned a number of elements: humility, friendliness, hospitality, generosity, gentleness, relationship to each other, sense of humor, and availability. A missionary said, "**Humility** is a dominant value in Thai culture. There are many things I like about Thai people and Thai culture." Another missionary interviewee added, "Thais are very friendly and hospitable. They are very humble and generous. They are also modest and lovable."

They also mentioned, negatively, that the Thai are dominated by fear fear of parents, fear of spirits, fear of many things. A missionary respondent shared:

I feel many Thais are motivated by **fear**. Because Buddhism teaches men and women to walk the middle road, and not to show emotional extremes, I am never really sure that the kindness that is being shown to me is sincere and from pure motives.

Missionaries agreed that they could not share their houses and food like the Thai. Americans agreed that Thais always considered them outsiders. Only one missionary said that we should dare to say something negative about **Eastern** culture and religion. A missionary commented:

The Thai share their houses and food with Americans very easily, but it is very difficult for American missionaries to do the same in **return** to the same degree. There is a wall between Americans and the Thai. I feel that I **will** always be an outsider to them.

The response of Christians to question C. The majority of Christians who answered this question mentioned that Thai culture is meek, polite, respectful of parents, non-aggressive, humble, soft, and merciful. A Thai word is used here: "**Pranee-pranorm**." It means "**making** peaceful and smooth **relationship**." Thai culture is gracious and joyful. A Christian said, "**Thai** culture is modest and sophisticated. It is not harsh or aggressive. It demonstrates politeness, humility, and **respect**. Thai culture is slow, smooth, and **neat**." Another Christian added, Thai culture is meek **culture**." It can be summed up as **Pranee Pranorm** (compromise with a smooth **relationship**). When the Thai respect and trust someone, they will continue to do that for a long period of time. The Thai call this element *Jong Rak Pak Dee*.

Thai culture has weaknesses, however. The Thai dare not share their ideas frankly; they cannot express their ideas straightforwardly. One Christian mentioned, They may speak something nice while in their hearts they do not feel pleasant. This habit causes foreigners to think that the Thai is hypocritical but the Thai see it as '**social cosmetic**.'" The reason for this approach is that they do not want to break a relationship by speaking straightforwardly. The other negative factor is that they do not want to accept blame for bad consequences. They want to explain them away by using many reasons. They blame environment, others, *Karma*, but not their own mistakes. A Thai Christian commented, "When something wrong happens,

the Thai always blame the environment, unseen power, **Karma**, and other causes. They like to excuse themselves and become defensive. They rarely blame themselves and find a better way to improve **themselves**."

The response of Buddhists to question C. Buddhists provided numerous ideas in this section. They explained that Thai culture requires respect, humility, and friendliness to one another. They do not want anyone to force or control their lives; rather, they love and admire freedom to do things by themselves. The Thai prefers to see things done in smoothness, softness, and sophistication. A Buddhist interviewee suggested:

Thai culture requires respect for age, and in social and economic levels. It admires smoothness, softness, and sophistication. It denies aggressiveness, a force or a command to do things. Any forces that oppress people and customs are considered to be unacceptable. The Thai love freedom and want to do things by themselves.

The word *Jai* (heart) was used to explain this answer. The Thai usually will *Ru Jai* (know the hearts of others), ***Mee Nam Jai*** (carry their **concerns** in the hearts and be ready to help others). They admire sincerity, repetitious visitations (*Pai Ma Ha Sue*), sharing, and **togetherness**. Thai people hate pomposity and favoritism. Loving unity, mercy, and sacrificial living are qualities the Thai admire. Another Buddhist commented:

I do not like the way some missionaries and Thai Christians share their religion. It creates a wall around me and I have to build my own wall to protect Buddhism and myself from being a Christian. They do not *Ru Jai* and *Mee Nam Jai* because they violate Thai culture greatly.

Another added:

The best way to share Christianity is to make Buddhists accept Christians at first by extending a genuine friendship. Christians have standards such as sincerity, mercy, love, and sacrificial life. Show all of these to Buddhists. Then **find** a good time to explain to them. Do not go and talk about Christianity without being accepted by the person to whom you speak.

General statement of all three groups to question C. All three groups expressed their attitudes to Thai culture. Missionaries and Thai Christians mentioned strong and weak points in Thai culture while Buddhists made suggestions about Thai culture in order to help missionaries and Thai Christians improve their Christian witnessing.

Missionaries could name many good elements in Thai culture. They saw a broad range of cultural elements. Thai Christians were able to **mention** deeper elements such as *Pranee-Pranorm* (compromise with a smooth relationship). Missionaries and Thai Christians saw weak points in areas in which they worked with the Thai. The interview research seemed to confirm that dialogue with each other helped both groups gain more knowledge in the culture of the people whom they encountered.

Missionaries seemed to agree that they are considered as outsiders to the Thai because of their inability to follow the Thai way in many areas.

## The Response of Missionaries, Thai **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question

### C1

[Question C1 for missionaries: What was your feeling when you presented the gospel to the **Thai?**]

[Question C1 **for** Thai Christians and Buddhists: What was your feeling when you heard missionaries and Thai Christians present the gospel to **you?**]

The response of missionaries to **question C1**. In this section, 21 missionaries were asked their feeling when they witnessed to Buddhists. All of them were **frustrated**, awkward, struggling, and in difficulty; they were afraid the Thai are indifferent since very few Thais seem interested and there appears to be no impact on their thinking. One missionary said, The basic feeling is that they receive what you say, at least receive your message. Frustration comes at the end, no **response.**" Another respondent mentioned, "I have been in Thailand for two years. I feel awkward because I have shared the gospel too soon." A missionary interviewee added, "I have always been frustrated because they said all religions are good. Anyhow, I am very happy because I can share the gospel."

The response of Christians to question **C1**. Forty-three Thai Christians shared responses **concerning** the question of their feelings when they heard the presentation of the gospel by missionaries and Thai Christians. Thirteen said they felt negative; seven Christians expressed that it was strange to hear the gospel at first; thirteen were positive and said they were happy, warm and wanted to believe; four Christians mentioned that they did not feel anything; and the rest had many responses to share, e.g.

the teachings of the gospel when explained by Christians are not clear and many times confuse hearers.

Those **13** Christians who were negative at first expressed that gospel communicators spoke nonsense stories and brought a new set of reasons to explain our human lives which did not fit their **worldview** at all, e.g. creation and resurrection. Buddhists perceive that Christianity is a religion of **Westerners**. Some of them thought that Thai Christians received salaries from missionaries to witness. They were angry that the Thai Christians denied Buddhism. They thought the Christians must have been brainwashed. They heard the stories with many questions and thought the stories were funny and sometimes stupid and lacking in reason. One Christian shared:

It was unbelievable for me to hear the gospel at first. I felt that the presentation of the gospel lacked reasoning. I thought at first that those Christians who shared the gospel with me must receive benefits or salaries from Christian organizations or from **Farangs**.

Another Thai Christian said, "**It** was like a fairy tale or nonsense stories and even funny. I do not know why Christians are willing to believe those stories are **true**."

Those who heard the gospel **with** a strange feeling, or doubtful mind, thought that the way Christ solved human problems was a new truth for them. It could not fit into their minds. They admired Christ's love but not his theology of solving human problems. A Christian commented:

It was also strange to my ears to hear such a story. I asked myself whether they told me a lie. Those miracles are so strange that you

**could** not find them anywhere in the **world**. Why did they have to tell me anyhow.

Thirteen people were impressed once they heard the gospel. They said they felt warm in their hearts, happy in their lives, and impressed by **Christians'** love and peace. **It** should be observed that all respondents expressed themselves in terms of their feelings. Their feelings encouraged them to seek Christ. Coupled with the example of a good Christian life, feeling creates reliability for Buddhists in accepting Christ. A Christian shared, "I felt that I lacked what they shared. I do not care about Buddhism or Christianity. Anything that makes me happy, I accept **that**." A Christian respondent added:

My friends who told me the gospel of Christ were meek and gentle. They showed their peaceful minds and calmness to me. All my American friends answered my questions with gentleness, especially related to Buddhism.

Only four people responded that they felt nothing. They said, "**It is so-so**." The rest of them said that after Christians finished their presentation, doubt came in their minds.

The response of Buddhists to **question C1**. Thirty-nine Buddhists answered this question. Seven Buddhists felt good about gospel presentations, but they understood that it was an unsuccessful method. Six of them felt neutral, but the majority mentioned that the method was strange, unimpressive, and unsuccessful. They were not happy to see missionaries or Thai Christians separate the Thai into Thai Buddhists and Thai Christians

and treat each group differently. The Thai require proper manners at the right time and place. A Buddhist said:

It was their right to propagate their religion. But it was strange to hear the stories. Some were believable, but some of them were unbelievable. Some were **so-so**, but others were boring. I felt they did not know how to present the gospel **interestingly** to Buddhists.

One Buddhist respondent commented:

They have their own right to **proclaim**, but we also have our own right not to believe. It was so pitiful to see them walk back and **forth** and shout out around a market place. It was like they want to sell something that people did not want to buy. I do not want Buddhists to see them as jokers.

A Buddhist added:

Many of them applied improper manners, and methods. They demonstrated their religion at the wrong place and the wrong time, **e.g.**, they put small yellow posters on high coconut trees that **said**, The blood of Jesus cleanses away your **sin**." I do not like to read. If Christians or missionaries have any blessings for me, they can tell me in person.

#### General statement of the responses of all three **groups** to question

**C1.** Three groups had different feelings after sharing or hearing the gospel.

Missionaries felt frustrated, awkward, and were discouraged because Buddhists could not understand the gospel they shared.

Some Thai Christians recalled their feelings when they were Buddhists and heard the gospel. They mentioned that they felt negative, funny, and stupid for the story they heard and the persons who shared the message **with** them. Others, however, did not feel that way, but rather felt warm, happy, and wanted to believe in Christ. They appreciated that Christ gave them solutions and hope in times of crisis.

Buddhists were not interested in the message but were concerned with the **result** of division between the social **networks--Thai** Christians and Thai **Buddhists**. They expressed their ideas that Christianity came to divide the Thai into two groups. This response suggests Thai solidarity is very strong.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question C2

[Question C2 : What are the things missionaries and Thai Christians should do or should not do or say in order to communicate the gospel **effectively?**]

The response of missionaries to question C2. Twenty-six missionaries answered C2. Five of them agreed that they should not compare religions. One of them **said**, They should not compare Buddhism and Christianity or speak negatively about Thai culture or **faith.**" Another missionary added:

We should not compare religions and argue with Buddhists point by point. Get to know them, smile, be rational, be fun, and do not be too serious. Find their felt needs, share your testimony, take them to church, and introduce them to Thai Christians.

Sixteen of them shared their methodologies in Christian witness. First, they all agreed that evangelizing Thais is a process. One added, "**Missionaries** should build relationships with them in order to share the good news over an extended period of time. Interest must be created in the gospel. Felt needs must be observed. Before the Thai are interested in the gospel, they must see how it could help them in their needs in some way.

Second, all missionaries agreed that **Christians'** lives should demonstrate Christlikeness and high morality. One said:

**Christian** lives should be examples to them. Christians' lifestyles must reflect Christ. Expose Buddhists to church and let them see Christians' lives and hear their testimonies. Do not try to be pushy but allow Buddhists and the Holy Spirit to lead the conversation. Don't share with someone who does not want to hear. Ask many questions to see if the receptors understand the message of the gospel.

The rest of the missionaries compared aggressiveness among Christians and missionaries. One **missionary** mentioned:

In general Chinese are more aggressive than the Thai in sharing the gospel. Korean missionaries are more aggressive than other groups in Thailand. A younger person is more aggressive than an older one. Using verbal persuasion only is considered to be more aggressive than showing Christian lifestyles.

The response of Christians to question C2. Sixty-five Christians made suggestions about what Christians should do and say or should not do and say. **Thirty-two** Christians said that they should build genuine and long-term relationships and should mention Buddhism in a positive way. They said Christians should speak the gospel while developing relationships. A Christian mentioned:

Christians should build a genuine and long-term relationship until Buddhist friends trust us; then begin to share the gospel softly. Christians should not think of their own business in compressing the gospel into the hearts of the Thai. Christians should be concerned with their whole beings and pray for them everyday.

One respondent added:

We Christians should speak positively about Buddhism and should not look down upon their faiths. But we should be able to show the imperfections of Buddhism which Christ can fulfill for them.

Thirty-three Christians provided various ideas regarding what not to do and say to Buddhists. Sixteen of them said that Christians should not

force Buddhists to believe in Christ or blame Buddhism or put themselves above other people. Christians should not be aggressive against the Buddhist **faith**. A Christian in the South said:

Do not place Christianity high and at the same time push Buddhism down. Do not try to force them to become Christians by using some methods or using a condition. Do not show to them that you are not interested in them when they reject Christ. Christians should continue to be genuine friends even when they do not accept Christ.

The rest of them mentioned a number of ideas as follows. They should not mention Buddhism at all. They should allow Buddhists to absorb Christianity bit by **bit**. Christians should not appear to always want to win arguments. Christians should not say **that** Buddhism is **satanic**. They should not say, "If you do not believe **in** Christ, you will go to **hell**."

The response of Buddhists to question C2. Any Christian behaviors **or** motives which contradict the above cultural elements will encounter barriers created by Buddhists. Missionaries and Christians tend **to** be perceived **as** outsiders automatically and are seen by Buddhists **as** those who violate Thai cultural values. Missionaries' **purposes**, goals, and presence in Thailand may be misunderstood by Buddhists, who may think missionaries come **to** destroy Buddhism; they may doubt missionaries' purposes and in the end reject missionaries. This does not mean that they will be enemies **or** persecute missionaries. They will listen well but reject the gospel **in** their hearts.

On the contrary, if **missionaries** and Thai Christians know and follow well the elements of Thai culture, the Buddhists will perceive the persons and the message on their own merits.

Buddhists want missionaries and Thai Christians to know that Thai social solidarity is real and **closeknit**. Taking a member out of a social network when he or she becomes a Christian will, sooner or later, cause missionaries and the church to encounter a negative force from the social network of that new Christian.

General statement of the responses of all three **groups** to the question

**C2.** Missionaries and Thai Christians suggested that they should: **(1)** not compare religions, **(2)** understand that witnessing is a process, **(3)** build relationships in Christian witness, **(4)** create interest and find felt needs, **(5)** not push Buddhists in Christian witness.

Thai Christians added more elements: **(1)** do not mention Buddhism at all, **(2)** allow Buddhists to absorb the gospel bit by bit, **(3)** do not say Buddhism is satanic, **(4)** do not say, **"If** you do not believe in Christ, you will go to **hell.**"

Buddhists do not want missionaries and Christians to take new converts out of their social contexts. If they do, missionaries and Christians will be perceived by Buddhists as: **(1)** outsiders, **(2)** those who come to destroy Buddhism and violate Thai cultural values. Buddhists may doubt the purpose for the coming of missionaries and Christians. **In** the end, missionaries and Thai Christians **will** be rejected.

The interview results show that the problem in Christian witness may start from the mindsets of **Christians** and missionaries. On arrival they intended to win souls actively. Their intentions generated each step of their strategies. Buddhists were unhappy to see their members violate the social networks. The context should play an **important** factor in shaping strategies of missionaries. Missionaries seemed to be **concerned** with their gains in Christian witness while Buddhists were **concerned** with the loss and conflict in their social networks caused by Christians. I think that if missionaries and Christians are insiders and live closely within the **context**, problems would be solved.

#### The Response of Missionaries, Thai **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question

##### C3

[Question C3 for missionaries: What kind of winsome behavior or lifestyle of missionaries would convince a Buddhist to study Christianity or become a **Christian**?]

[Question C3 for Christians and Buddhists: What kind of winsome behavior or lifestyle of missionaries and Thai Christians would convince you to study Christianity or become a **Christian**?]

The **response** of missionaries to question C3. Eighteen missionaries mentioned that Christian lifestyles are able to convince Buddhists more than any methods at first. They said that missionaries should develop listening ears, show interest, develop kind, sincere, sacrificial lives, love the Thai and spend time with them. Missionaries should display love, **service**, commitment, humility, friendship, and fun. Simple and merciful lifestyles, and ability to adapt to the Thai culture are powerful tools in Christian

witness. Spending time together with **Christians** or missionaries in their homes and around their families can create a bonding relationship for the Thai. One missionary said that some missionaries and Thai Christians of earlier years were more devout and dedicated than some of the present missionaries. Some were men and women of **prayer**. In short, they acknowledged that many missionaries in the past were far better Christians than current missionaries. They were more imaginative, more sanctified, harder working, possibly better educated. Transparent in lifestyle is the best **policy**," one of them added.

The response of Thai Christians to question C3. Christians expressed their ideas **concerning** winsome behavior in convincing Buddhists. They said that **Christians'** lives are important and are good examples to non-Christians. They should follow the Scriptures, show Christ's love and develop **long-term** relationships, be helpful, polite, sincere. Christians should invest their lives as members of society. They should be open-minded and develop listening ears. Interviewees mentioned a number of ethical elements which are already mentioned in the Bible or in Buddhism. Gospel communicators must have commitment in prayer and must have developed the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

The response of Buddhists to question C3. Buddhists suggested that Christian witnesses should start with Christians' lives, not words or posters or tracts. "**Let** us see Christ, his teachings or a better ethical **standard**," they said. At present, the propagation of the gospel of the Christian church is

strange to Buddhists. **Advertisements**, printed matter, and high powered persuasion used by Christians and missionaries are considered strange and **overwhelming**. "We are hit from **nowhere**," the respondents explained after they had experienced Christian methods. A pomposity of religion is impolite. Buddhists said, "**Do** not keep on telling us but listen to us and ask us some **questions**." Find out the goodness in Buddhism, start with similarities, not differences. Finding contact points in Thai cultural and religious values makes up the best approach for reaching Buddhists.

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question

C3. Missionaries and Thai Christians both mentioned the quality of winsome behavior. They suggested that they should develop listening ears, relationships, the fruit of the Spirit, etc. Missionaries want to find elements or strategies in order to use them to win souls.

Buddhists seemed to agree with Christians. They suggested that missionaries and Christians should start with their own lives, not strategies. Buddhists added that Christians' lives should be accepted by them before they accepted the teachings. Buddhists wanted Christians to ask them about Buddhism. Missionaries and Christians should not show their **eagerness** explicitly in converting Buddhists. It seems to suggest to me that conversion derives from **Buddhists'** freedom. They suggested that Christian conversion should not be a main target of missionaries and Thai Christians, but rather the product of living Christlike lives.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to Question C4

[Question C4: If Christians would like to develop a relationship with a **Buddhist**, please tell me about what a Christian **should** do and **should** not **do?**]

1. The response of missionaries to question **C4**. Sixteen

missionaries shared how to develop relationships with Buddhists. Most of them said that **availability**, openness, friendship on human and social levels, and genuine love are needed. Willingness to dedicate large blocks of time to the Thai is necessary. Flexibility and willingness to get on the Thai person's agenda rather than making a Thai person get on the Christians' agenda needs to be considered. Allow Thais to come to Christians' houses and have fellowship w/th Christians. It is imperative to show interest in the Thai and be humble before them, listen to them, and pray for them. A missionary who works with university students said:

I believed that a Christian should in his heart, surrender all of his life to Christ and totally dedicate himself to becoming a servant of those he wishes to develop a relationship with to evangelize. Secondary the Christian must be willing to dedicate large blocks of time to the Thai that they want to develop a relationship w/th. This maybe very different, especially for Americans, who may be very goal oriented and tend to block out small pieces of time for people. The Christian will need to be flexible and willing to get on the Thai person's agenda rather than making a Thai person get on their agenda.

Another missionary respondent added:

Christians should be available for friendship, open to share their faith without imposing or trying to dominate. They should invite Buddhist friends to our church or house. They should become friends on a human and social level to create trust.

Another missionary commented, **"We** should be humble and listen to

them and pray for them.

The response of Thai Christians to question C4. On developing relationships with **Buddhists**, a Thai Christian said, "**Christians** should continue to help and develop good relationships with Buddhists especially in times of suffering and **crisis**." Another Christian respondent added, "Christians should not have any hidden agendas in building up relationships with Buddhists but should be sincere. Sharing material needs and joining rituals and ceremony which are not contradictory to Christian faith are encouraged for a deep **relationship**." One respondent shared her idea:

Christians should not be pretentious in developing a relationship, but respect the thinking of their friends. Arguments with Buddhists should be avoided, though polite dialogue should be encouraged. Christians should go places with Buddhists but avoid anything biblically forbidden, e.g., worship idols or involvement in any type of religious ceremonies, cremation and wedding ceremony where worshipping idols is required.

The response of Buddhists to question C4. Christians who have joy in their lives can trigger Buddhists to think. Then they are able to point the way to them and seem to be successful in Christian witness. One Buddhist said, "A good Christian should demonstrate joy in his or her **life**, *Me Sanej* (posses a personal touch), and *sanuke*. One respondent added, "Christians must be accepted by Buddhists prior to acceptance of the Christian **religion**." Another Buddhist respondent shared his idea:

Looking down on Buddhism and comparing religions are prohibited. Selling religions like selling insurance is not impressive to the **Thai**. Missionaries should not start with the miracles of Jesus but with his ethical teachings.

One added:

They **should** not talk too much or show their eagerness to persuade aggressively. They should not threaten Buddhists about **hell**. Buddhists tend to believe Christ quietly by themselves if Christians provide a clear understanding for them.

General statement of the responses of all three **groups** to question

C4. Missionaries and Christians proposed many elements in developing relationships with Buddhists. They are: openness, flexibility, availability, genuine love, etc. Christians added that this relationship must be sincere, **with** no hidden agendas. In the time of crisis, this relationship should be demonstrated.

Buddhists suggested that they do not want missionaries and Christians to consciously use relationships as strategies in Christian witness. Buddhists understood that relationships could fail if missionaries and Christians did not pay attention to the context. Buddhists can be drawn to Christianity and Christians if Christians demonstrate joy, a personal touch, and *sanuke* in their lives. Buddhists want to observe Christian lives by themselves. Those Christians who look down on Buddhism, talk too much about Christianity, and persuade aggressively destroy relationships with Buddhists. They should consider the requests of Buddhists in developing the relationship which, in **turn**, would make it meaningful and **long-term**.

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to question C.

All three groups admired Thai culture. At the same time they could share both strong points and weak points in the culture. Missionaries and Thai

Christians responded that they knew how to share Christ with the Thai.

However, when they were asked about their feeling concerning the Christian witness, missionaries and Thai Christians were frustrated and discouraged.

I found a gap between the answers of missionaries and Christians compared with those of Buddhists regarding actual witnessing.

Buddhists asked missionaries and Christians to take roles in society in order to be able to live closer to the members of that society. Missionaries would thus know the needs, interests, and problems of the community they lived in.

Missionaries and Christians were asked what they should do and should not do in actual witnessing. They said they needed to create interest and find felt needs of Buddhists by building relationships with them.

Missionaries and Thai Christians saw these as strategies to win souls, but Buddhists suggested these were ways in which missionaries should live.

Buddhists gave three hints for Christian witness to Buddhists. First, they should accept Buddhists and study Buddhism seriously in order to discover good things in Buddhism. Second, they should find some contact points and start with similarities. Third, they should show their lifestyles to Buddhists. Buddhists suggested that in the process of witnessing, missionaries and Christians should not threaten, look down on Buddhism, and separate members from **Buddhists'** society.

It seems to me that what Buddhists shared is not part of the mindset of missionaries and Christians. Evidently, missionaries and Thai Christians

have neglected the knowledge from the **context**, thus closing the possibilities of **sharing** Christ in indigenous ways. A long term, genuine, and sincere relationship with Buddhists can be developed only when missionaries and Christians follow what Buddhists suggested **earlier**. If that is the case, missionaries and Thai Christians no doubt would feel frustrated and discouraged in sharing the gospel **with** the Thai.

D. The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question D

Question D is **concerned** with the opinion of the same three groups **concerning** Jesus Christ, Thai Christians, and missionaries. Both favorable and unfavorable impressions reveal Buddhist mentality and temperament. It is hoped that thereby missionaries and Thai Christians can **learn** how to live their lives and present the gospel along the line of the temperament of the receptors.

Question D consisted of D1 and D2. Each section is **concerned** with ideas of: (a) Jesus Christ, (b) missionaries, and (c) Thai Christians.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question D1(a)

[Question **D1(a)**: In your opinion, what impresses you about Jesus Christ?]

The response of missionaries to question **D1(a)**. Fourteen of 24 **Western** missionaries were impressed by Christ's sacrificial life and his coming to save human beings by dying on the cross for the sin of the world, by rising again on the third day, and by welcoming and accepting us with open **arms** without condition. One missionary said, "**He** left heaven and came to earth to be with us so they could **learn** of him. Then he died so that

we could have a relation with the **Father.**" Another respondent **added**, "I am impressed about his death on the cross for our sin." A missionary who works among university students commented, "I am impressed that he is God and as such is in absolute control of the **universe.**"

Only **10** percent of missionaries were influenced by his love, grace and humility. A missionary said:

This is an easy question to answer. My answer is that everything about Jesus Christ impresses me. But if I had to choose just a couple of characteristics, I would say that his humility and **servanthood** would be at the top of the list.

Another missionary added, "I am impressed about his love for all people especially as it was demonstrated on the **cross.**"

The **response** of Christians to question **D1(a)**. What impressed Thai Christians about Jesus Christ? Twelve Christians were impressed by Christ's death on the cross. A Christian said, "I am impressed by his death on the cross so that he can cleanse me from my sin." Another added, "**Christ's** death demonstrated the central teaching of Christianity."

Sixty-one Thai Christians were impressed by his love, mercy, **concern** for others, sincerity, and sacrificial life. One of Thai Christians said, "I am greatly impressed by Jesus' **Metta Karuna** (mercy), his love, politeness, sincerity, and sacrificial **life.**" Another Christian responded, "I am impressed by his humility and his **love.**"

The response of Buddhists to question **D1(a)**. Five Buddhists were impressed by his death on the cross. Thirty-nine Buddhists were impressed by the affective domain of Jesus Christ, e.g., his sacrificial life, **concern** for

others, **patience**, humility and good teachings. A Buddhist said, "His sacrificial life and his ethical teachings mold my heart and *Kloom Klao Jit Jai* (make my heart more calm, softer, and **smoother**).". One Buddhist respondent added, "I was impressed by his sacrificial life, patience, **concern** for others, and **humility**."

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question

**D1(a)**. All groups were impressed with Jesus Christ. The Thai were impressed in affective domains, and missionaries were impressed by the fact of the gospel, namely the atonement part of the gospel which they have to proclaim. This means that to approach the Thai **with** the gospel one must begin with the affective domain such as the results of being Christians. Thai Christians and Buddhists were impressed by **Jesus'** love, mercy, **concern**, sincerity, and sacrificial **life** for others, but missionaries were impressed by his death on the cross for the sin of the world. The Thai are **concerned** with lifestyles, while missionaries are impressed by the content of the gospel. For the Thai, what Jesus did on the cross is less important than who Jesus is in dealing with others.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians**. and Buddhists to Question **D1(b)**

[Question **D1(b)**: In your opinion, what impresses you about **missionaries**?]

The response of missionaries to question **D1(b)**. What are the things that impress missionaries about themselves? Eighteen out of 25 were impressed with their commitment in leaving their home country to come to Thailand to carry their vision, dedicating their lives to God, and committing

themselves to do God's will. One missionary **said**, "I guess the number one thing that impresses me with most of the **missionaries** that I met is their willingness to **self-sacrifice**." Another missionary added:

I am impressed by the way they serve Christ **sacrificially** and die to themselves. **They** are willing to leave their homes, and **their** countries. They are convinced that the gospel is more important than staying home.

Only seven out of 25, or 28 percent spoke of **humility**, availability, honesty, and ability to do hard work in a hard field such as Thailand. One missionary said, "I am impressed by their availability and **humility**." Another missionary respondent added, "I am impressed by their optimism about Christ's power and ministry in **Thailand**."

The response of Christians to question D1(b). Thai Christians **feel** the same way about missionaries. Thai Christians are impressed by **missionaries'** commitment in leaving their homes and spending their **lives** in Thailand to serve the Lord in leading the Thai to know Christ. One Thai Christian said, "I am impressed by their commitment and their sacrificial **lives** to come to Thailand and help the Thai to know Jesus **Christ**." Another respondent added, "**Missionaries** obeyed God's call and came to serve the Thai **patiently**. I am impressed by their commitment, and their sacrificial **lives** (*Sia Safa Chiwit*)."

The response of Buddhists to question D1(b). Eleven Buddhists **did** not know or have not met missionaries. One Buddhist said, "I have **never** seen **them**." Another added, "I do not know any missionaries or have **met** them face to face." Those who are familiar with them said they are **helpful**,

merciful, have good intentions and have sacrificial lives. They try hard to evangelize the Thai and do what they think is good for the Thai. One Buddhist said, They have good intentions to tell what they think is right to the Thai. They are helpful and reliable. They have sacrificial **lives.**" Another respondent commented, They are merciful because they point the way out of our sin."

Only two Buddhists said that they were not impressed by missionaries at all. One of them said:

I am not impressed by missionaries. I am doubtful about their work in **Thailand**. If they said they come to help us, they should live among us. They live by their own groups. They may escape from becoming soldiers in their countries. Some of them may serve as **C.I.A.** agents. I believe that only a few of them come to Thailand because they love God.

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question

D1(b). Thai **Christians**, missionaries, and Buddhists, are impressed by **missionaries'** commitment. The Thai seemed to be interested in benefits they got and lifestyles of missionaries they saw. Buddhists were impressed that they were merciful, helpful, and had good intentions in doing their jobs in Thailand. Missionaries were impressed by their own commitment **from** the point of view of givers. They mentioned that they left their homes and work to come to Thailand.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to Question **D1(c)**

[Question 01 (c): in your **opinion**, what impressed you about Thai **Christians?**]

The response of missionaries to **question D1(c)**. When asked about their impressions of Thai Christians, twelve of them said that they were favorably impressed by the sacrifice, dedication, and great commitment of the Thai Christians who struggle with many difficulties and have to pay the price of being a Christian minority in society. They always show good courage and follow Christ. One missionary said, **"I am impressed by their sacrificial lives to go against their society and family and trust Christ."**

Another respondent commented, **"Their commitment, their willingness to sacrifice, their love for God, and their patience to their families and friends."**

The rest said that they are impressed by the openness, teachability, love, humility and gentleness of the Thai. Another said, "The things that impress me most about Thai Christians is that they are some of the most pleasant and enjoyable people to be around that **I have ever met."**

Readers who heard about negative statements of Thai Christians can read section D2(c) on pages **278-280**. This is the same problem as seen among some pioneer missionaries. Their lives were very impressive, but when they opened their mouth, their Christian witness was interpreted by the Thai as aggressive.

The response of Christians to question **D1(c)**. Again when asked about their impression of Thai Christians, respondents answered that they

are impressed by love, caring, **concern**, patience, humility and **sacrificial** lives of the Thai more than anything. One Thai Christian **said**, Thai Christians love one another. They are very patient, **sacrificial**, sincere, and **humble.**" Another Christian commented, Thai Christians are caring people. They are so **concern** wth other **people."**

The response of Buddhists to question D1(c). Thai Christians are generally well received by Buddhists. Only four Buddhists said that some Christians are like Buddhists. One Buddhist said, "I do not see any differences between Thai Christians and Buddhists. They are all the same as other Thais."

Forty of them mentioned that Thai Christians are loving, helpful, warm, friendly, and meek. Christians love each other, and this is clearly seen by Buddhists. They follow the teachings of Jesus and follow their leaders. Their lifestyles are simple. They trust their God completely. They live sacrificial lives. One Buddhist said, Thai Christians are loving people. **They** are helpful, warm, and friendly. They love one another and are humble." Another Buddhist **added**, Thai Christians follow their leaders well. They trust their God and have sacrificial lives."

Then why are Buddhists not more attracted to becoming Christians? This is the same problem as seen among some pioneer missionaries. Their lives were very impressive, but when they opened their mouth, their Christian witness was interpreted by the Thai as aggressive. D2(c) provides some insights to this **question.** (see pages **278-280**)

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question

**D1(c).** Missionaries were impressed by **Thai** Christians' commitment to keep their faith alive in Buddhist society and among their social networks.

Buddhists and Thai Christians were impressed by the same **thing--their** lifestyles which revealed their inner selves. It should be noted that American missionaries admired and were impressed by the commitment of the Thai, but Buddhists and Thai Christians were impressed by their **lifestyles**.

The Response of Missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question **D2(a)**

[Question 02(a): In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of Jesus **Christ?**]

The response of missionaries to **question D2(a)**. Eighty percent of them said that there is nothing about Jesus Christ that they do not appreciate. Twenty percent of them mentioned unfavorable impressions. One of them **said**, Though Christ demands all of our lives, followers do not know anything scientifically, so they have to follow him by faith. His judgment and his way of doing things are sometimes difficult for us as human beings to **understand."** Another added, "**He** demanded all of our lives. Buddhists have difficulties to believe and **understand."**

The response of Christians to question **D2(a)**. Fifty-two out of seventy-three said that they had no unfavorable impressions of Jesus Christ. The rest said that they were not impressed about these aspects of Christ: **(1)** Christ used strong words for some people, **(2)** Jesus acted aggressively toward some people, **(3)** Christ answers our prayers slowly and sometimes not at all, and **(4)** sometimes they feel that God does not love and does not

come close to them. One Christian said, "**Jesus** Christ used some strong and aggressive words for some people. I feel that I would like to cry when I read those strong **words.**" Another Christians added, "**When** bad things happened to my friends, I prayed to Christ, but he kept quiet and did not answer my prayer at **all.**" One Christian commented, "**Sometimes** I feel that God does not come close and love me. He is very far. I feel that way."

The response of Buddhists to question D2(a) It is very interesting to note that all Buddhist respondents had no unfavorable impressions of Jesus Christ. One Buddhist said, "**I** have **none.**" Another Buddhist mentioned, "I do not have any." One respondent shared his idea, "I believe that Jesus was **broad-minded**, but the writers of the Bible wrote about him in such a way that he was very strong to some people. I think that those parts do not come from God.

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question D2(a). All Buddhist respondents and the majority of missionaries and Thai Christians had no unfavorable impressions of Christ.

Twenty percent of missionaries mentioned unfavorable impressions about Jesus Christ in terms of some theological concepts which caused them difficulty in understanding his ministry.

Thirty percent of Thai Christians felt that some actions of Christ created unfavorable impressions for them. The difference in this area is that missionaries had difficulty in their cognitive domain while Thai Christians paid attention to intuitive unfavorable affective impressions.

The Response of **Missionaries, Christians,** and Buddhists to Question D2 (b)

[Question D2(b): In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of **missionaries?**]

The response of missionaries to question **D2(b)**. It was interesting to hear them reveal the unfavorable aspects of their own group. The majority said that missionaries in Thailand are not sensitive to religious and cultural values of the Thai. Many of them are critical of Thai culture and do not adjust to it. Some of them impose **Western** culture on the Thai. They are not willing to take time to study. They are ethnocentric. One missionary said he met a missionary who had stayed in Thailand for more than ten years and still had not adjusted to the Thai. He did not **learn** the language well. Another mentioned that they do not accommodate themselves to living like Thais but maintain a **Western** standard of living. Their lifestyles seem opposite that of Christ in the Bible. Some of them have zeal without knowledge while some have knowledge but have lost zeal to serve Christ as effectively as they should. Lack of commitment for long-term **service** is another unfavorable impression in contrast to pioneer missionaries. A missionary respondent **commented, "Some** older missionaries seem not to have the same zeal as they used to have while some of the younger ones tend to be aggressive in their Christian **witness."** Another one advised, **"Missionaries** should come to work in Thailand for a long period of time. **I** have seen many missionaries come to work for only three to five years. Then they left Thailand and never **returned."**

Many respondents mentioned the temperament of many **missionaries**.

One of them **said**, "**Some missionaries** are angry at the Thai and not at all patient. They are **concerned** wth their programs first, not people. They love their packaged programs of evangelism and do not consider the contexts they attempt to **serve**."

The response of Christians to **question D2(b)**. Thai Christians do not like missionaries who look down upon Thai Christians and Buddhists. One said, "**This** ethnocentrism produces various behaviors. Missionaries use their power over the Thai. They seem to believe their words and their culture are always **correct**." Many missionaries think that Thailand is just an underdeveloped country. A Christian added:

They look at the Thai as lower people than missionaries. They separate themselves from the Thai. Some of them call themselves persons who come from developing countries, but, they called Thailand an undeveloped country.

Another Christian responded, "**Some** missionaries exercise their power over the Thai. They want the Thai to follow their plans. They treat us as if we do not have indigenous **methods**."

The response of Buddhists to **question D2(b)** Through Buddhists' eyes, missionaries cannot communicate well wth the Thai. One **said**, They mention God constantly. They create lack of interest in the minds of the Thai through their Christian witness. They are forceful and pushy in selling their religious ideas to Buddhists." Another Buddhist commented, They listened to us a little. They spoke a lot. They mentioned the miracles of Jesus. This made me confused. **I** am so tired of their methods of sharing Christianity

with us. Their ways of sharing Christianity are strange compared to our method of teaming **religion.**"

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question

D2(b). Thai Christians and missionaries agreed that weak points of missionaries are: **(1) insensitivity** to Thai culture, **(2) ethnocentrism**, **(3)** use of power over the Thai, and **(4)** lack of long-term commitment. For Buddhists, the missionaries' weaknesses are seen through their Christian witness. Missionaries are: **(1)** forceful, **(2)** pushy, and **(3)** have their own ways of doing things without considering the interests of the Thai.

The Response of Missionaries. **Christians.** and Buddhists to Question D2(c)

[Question D2(c): In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of Thai **Christians?**]

The response of missionaries to question **D2(c).** Twenty-five missionaries answered this question. Twenty-two of them shared a number of unfavorable impressions of Thai Christians. Five of them mentioned cultural matters.

Missionaries said that many Thai Christians lack discipline. They are untrained, easily discouraged, and passive, traits which may be derived from Buddhism. Relationships are put above principles. They have different ways of doing things. One missionary said, They receive salvation, but some of them are not **Jing Jang** (serious) in following Christ. They are discouraged **(Noi Jai) easily**. Some of them are passive, which I think is the influence of Buddhism. Relationship is always put above **principle.**"

Another missionary **mentioned**, They have a '**us/them**' mentality. They have received salvation but still live in a Buddhist frame of mind. Some Thai Christians are **still** afraid of *Phee* (ghosts) and some of them do not practice the teachings of the Bible after I taught them. They are weak in their commitment in observing commandments of Christ. They have uncritically accepted the form of **western culture.**"

The response of Christians to question D2(c). There are many elements that Thai Christians do not like about their own group. One **said**, Thai Christians are not serious in serving the Lord and some of them are **passive.**" Another added, They are divided among themselves in church. Their words and their deeds sometimes do not coincide. Some of them are aggressive and pushy in presenting the gospel."

One of them commented, "**At** present, there are many nominal Christians in Thailand. They are uncommitted and they do not come to church regularly. They are divided among themselves (*Bangpak-Bangpuook*)."**Another added**, They know the Bible, but they do not put it into practice. Many of them are passive and need to be motivated all the time. Some of them lack the quality of Thainess and do not demonstrate Christlikeness."

The response of Buddhists to question D2(c). Ten Buddhists said that Thai Christians are not aggressive, but 29 mentioned that they are. One Buddhist said, Their lives and words do not coincide. Their behavior and

teachings are not consistent. They openly war against **Buddhists** without knowing anything about **Buddhism.**" Another added:

They are narrow-minded people. They want Buddhists to join the worship at their churches but will not join Buddhist ceremonies at the temple. Their persuasion is a one-way street. They easily become angry. They **trust** in God in everything and sometimes do not work hard in helping the family. They love to compare religions.

General statement of the **responses** of all three groups to **question**

D2(c). Three groups shared three sides of the weaknesses of Thai Christians. Each group had its own perspectives. Thai Christians were aggressive to Buddhists in their Christian witness. But **missionaries**, mentioned that Thai Christians were difficult to train, lacked principles, and made missionaries feel like outsiders. Thai Christians were perceived by Buddhists as divided among themselves, and their lives did not coincide with their belief.

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to question D.

Almost all missionaries, Thai Christians, and all Buddhists were impressed by and admired Jesus Christ. Missionaries were impressed with the work of Christ (e.g., Christ came down from heaven to die on the cross for our sins) while Christians and Buddhists mentioned that they were impressed with Christ's lifestyle (e.g., his love, sacrificial **life**, mercy, and sincerity).

Missionaries and Thai Christians who consider their **verbal** Christian witness as their primary work will not communicate the gospel as well as those who first witness by their lifestyles.

Some Buddhists had not met **missionaries** and did not know what they do. Unlike Christians, they could not share missionaries' strong points. Buddhists used simple and general words for missionaries, e.g., they do good **things**, beneficial **things**, have good intentions, are helpful and humble.

Missionaries and Christians said that they were impressed by **missionaries'** commitment, dedication, and **sacrificial** lives. Missionaries said that missionaries in Thailand are not sensitive enough to Thai culture, and they are ethnocentric. **Many of** them prefer a short-term program to a lifetime commitment. Compared **with** earlier missionaries, many of them seem to have lost their zeal.

Thai Christians feel that missionaries separate themselves from the Thai Buddhists and Christians and look at them as a lower class of people—not equals with missionaries. Missionaries exercise their power over Thai Christians who work with them by various means, e.g., suggesting that Thai Christians follow their plans, methods, and programs, and unconsciously thinking that Thai Christians cannot originate their own methods in Christian witness. Buddhists who knew missionaries said that missionaries have problems in **cross-cultural** communication. Missionaries forcefully communicate the gospel and do not develop their listening ears to hear Buddhists' ideas.

**Concerning** Thai Christians, missionaries saw their strengths in two areas: **(1)** their commitment and dedication in standing firm in following Christ in their social networks, and **(2)** their lifestyles of being most pleasant

and enjoyable people to be around, open, teachable, and gentle. Buddhists and Thai Christians were impressed by their love, **caring, concern,** helpfulness, patience, and humility more than anything else.

Missionaries mentioned weaknesses of Thai Christians also. They said that Thai Christians lack discipline, are untrained, and are easily discouraged. They put relationship above principle. They hold a **“us-them”** mentality, and some of them continue to live in a Buddhist frame of mind. Is it possible that this evidence reflects the fact that the teachings of the Scripture by past missionaries and Thai Christian leaders did not penetrate their **worldview?**

Thai Christians shared that they see members of their own group as passive, not serious enough in serving the Lord, and divided among themselves. Some of them are aggressive and pushy in presenting the gospel. Their life and word do not coincide. It should be noted that weaknesses of missionaries and Thai Christians observed by Buddhists and Thai Christians (who came from Buddhist backgrounds) are the same. Again, do these evidences tell us that the past teachings of the Scripture by missionaries and Thai Christians did not offend the Thai for the right reasons, but rather for the wrong ones?

Buddhists observed that Christians are also aggressive. Their lives and words do not coincide. Their behavior and teaching are not consistent. They do not know how to communicate Christianity well. They are not smooth in sharing the gospel.

# E. The Response of **Missionaries**, Christians, and Buddhists to Question E

This section is the main section in **helping** us **understand** the mindsets of missionaries and Thai Christians in Christian witness to the Thai. This section intends to draw Buddhists' ideas **concerning** their reactions toward Christian witness of missionaries and Thai Christians.

Question E has seven sub-questions, E1-E7. A general statement is added at the end of each sub-question. A general conclusion will be discussed **at** the end of section E, pages 310-312.

[Question E: Tell me about sharing Christian faith to the **Thai**.]

The response of missionaries to question E. Twenty-eight missionaries answered this question. The interview research revealed various methods used by various missionary organizations. Ten American missionaries who were interviewed suggested that they used four steps as follows:

First, get to know them: know their wants, desires, needs, problems, everything about them.

Second, create interest in the gospel: testimony, questions about sin, telling a person that Jesus can meet their needs, taking someone to church or an evangelistic meeting.

Third, share the gospel: any method is okay if you have done the first steps well.

Fourth, help them make a decision: **talk** about how they can tell their families, how to be a Christian in a Buddhist society, and let them talk with other Thai Christians who have faced these problems.

Missionaries from other groups said that methods depend on situations, but it is good to start on a low key by slowly building up the

relationship, then show the **"Jesus film."** This film was prepared by Campus Crusade for **Christ** in Thailand. The film is concerned with the life of Jesus Christ. The film has been used to spread the life story of Jesus Christ and lay down a foundation for Christian witness. The film itself has not yet caused a people movement toward Christ in Thailand.

Other groups shared that missionaries should find out Thai needs. Then ask, "How can God be a blessing to **you?**" One said, "I always used what I called the '**blessing**' concept or the '**happy** and **joyful**' concept, and I waited for them to contact me **back.**"

Almost all missionaries agreed that to witness among Thai Buddhists they must start with relationships. One added:

Missionaries should begin with building rapport. It is the way to show holy lifestyles in their daily lives, in their family lives, and in their social lives. This relationship consists of a number of elements: love, availability, **togetherness**, unconditional help, and development of listening ears.

A missionary added:

Missionaries suggest that they should speak less and listen more to Buddhists in order to understand them. They say that missionaries should not treat the differences in religious elements as a big issue which needs to be brought up for serious discussion or clarification. The social responsibility can be used along with evangelism. Elements which prohibit witnessing to the Thai are manipulation, anger, demanding more from **Buddhists'** lives, and making them lose face.

The **response** of Christians to question E. Sixty-seven Thai Christians agreed that the way to start their Christian witness is to develop relationships with Buddhist friends. Thai Christians mentioned seven common elements: building rapport, showing lifestyles (qualities of ethical lifestyles), helping

**them**, listening to their **needs**, being patient, not being too **serious** in sharing the **gospel**, and not being forceful or pushy. Christians provided a number of elements which missionaries did not mention. The relationship serves as a vehicle to show the things of Christ such as the fruit of the Spirit, sympathy, sacrificial lives, humility, sincerity, unconditional love, mercy, God's peace in the heart, politeness, and Christ's goodness. The relationship must be personal, casual, long-term, consistent, and natural. A Thai Christian shared her idea:

I used unplanned relationships. I mean you should not be aware of the relationship you build. Relationship is the result of Christians sharing themselves with **Buddhists**. Humility, sympathy, **sacrifice**, sincerity, the fruit of the Spirit, unconditional love, politeness, and Christ's goodness are the things that we should share. This life sharing should be consistent, natural, **long-term**, casual, and personal.

Another added:

I think that building a relationship with Buddhists is one of the best ways. We build up rapport by exposing our lives to them and listen to their needs, and then help them. We should not be forceful and serious in sharing the content of the gospel with them without considering the timing of the Holy Spirit.

Some Thai elements Christians mentioned will, if applied, bring growth and healthy relationships. A Christian respondent suggested:

Christians should witness in a way of *sanuke*, *Jai Yen* (cool heart), serving one another without condition, showing care of, **concern** for, and well-wishing for one another (*Hwang Dee*), allowing others to enjoy their freedom, smoothness in relationship, doing things softly, and developing a greater degree of closeness little by little as time passes.

Various elements from the Thai context were suggested in presenting the gospel. A Christian commented:

Dialogue needs to be **applied**. **Everything** about feeling and affections of the receptors needs to be taken care of such as *hak ham nam jai* (do not break feeling), *Ta Norm Nam Jai* (preserve and care for feelings of others), and put one's feet in the other person's shoes.

The response of Buddhists to question E. Buddhists suggested that missionaries and Thai Christians should study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously. They should seek to find good things in both of them. They said that Christian witness should be unplanned and natural. A Buddhist commented:

When Christians witnessed to Buddhists, they would say, **"Do not believe in that thing."** I would like to see Christians witness naturally more than by a planned method. They should start with doing good to Buddhists. Please do not be serious (*Our Jing Our Jang*). I wonder why they have to sing songs all the times.

Many Buddhists still believe that Christianity is the religion of **Westerners**. Buddhists said that if their ideas are not correct, Christians should educate them. But how can Christians educate Buddhists? They said that if Christians do not use Thai ways, we will see that Christianity is the religion of the **Westerners**. A Buddhist lady said that time is one of the most important factors. She said, **"Christians** should expect a long-term benefit. They should build up and keep their relationships with Buddhists as long as possible. Then we share Christianity bit by bit." Christians seem to enjoy striking Buddhists unconsciously with a hammer to drive wedges of strong words into Thai hearts and only use the glue of apology to heal those wounds later. Buddhists are interested in religious mores or ethical mores while Christians primarily proclaim the miracles of Christ. A young devout

Buddhist **commented**, "**Buddhists** are interested in ethical teachings. When friendships grow, the miracles of God can be shared. Without ethical teachings, Buddhists are not impressed by **Christianity**."

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question E.

Missionaries and Thai Christians agreed to start with developing relationships and demonstrating ethical lifestyles to the Thai. The relationship, they said, must be long-term, personal, casual, and sincere. Thai Christians contributed to the quality of relationships in two more areas: **(1)** Christians must show their sacrificial lives, and **(2)** Christians must help Buddhists in concrete ways.

Buddhists mentioned the root of the problem in building relationships. They would **like** missionaries and Thai Christians to study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously so that they would find good things in both of them. They saw the present Christian witness as being **Western** and foreign to them. They suggested Christians develop and demonstrate the Thai way of witnessing.

The Response of Missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question E1

[Question **E1**: In your opinions, what ways are appropriate for sharing the gospel with the **Thai**?]

The response of missionaries to question E1. Fifty percent of missionary respondents mentioned that the most effective way for sharing the gospel with the Thai is to develop relationships with them. One missionary said, "The most effective way is to develop relationships first or at least after the gospel has been **shared**." Another added, "**Communicate**

gospel stories and values through personal relationships. Point to areas in their life where you see Christ at work. Discover Christ together **with** the people as one of their **own**."

The other 50 percent have their own methods. Those methods are: (1) sharing a personal testimony and then explaining a bridge diagram from the Navigators, (2) sharing the Four Spiritual Laws of Campus Crusade for Christ, (3) telling them about the sovereignty of God and the sin of humans. One of them said, "I used my own personal testimony, the bridge diagram, and sometimes the Four Spiritual Laws." Another commented, "I would like them to know how big God **is**, and how heavy the sin of man **is**. It is meaningless to see only the love of God. Why do we accept God's love if human beings have no problems? They are not fearful of God if they are not taught about hell." A Baptist missionary mentioned, "I preach directly to them at a park. After preaching, I give them tracts and lead them to talk with Christians about Christ in detail. When they pray to receive Christ, I make disciples in about six to seven years." Another missionary said, "[I use] Any way that does not compromise the cross of Christ. In other words, whatever is biblical would work." It should be noted here that missionaries mentioned a number of **Western** methods or a combination of **Western** methods which they may use in various countries. In actual practice, missionaries do not know any methods others than what they shared.

The **response** of Christians to question **E1**. Thirty-nine Christians said that they used relationships, built up rapport, and shared their **concern** with

**Thais.** This process takes time. They said that Christians should build bridges until Buddhists accepted them before they shared the gospel. One said, "I spent a long time building a genuine and long-term relationship. This must be consistent. Christians should suffer with them and identify with them in their sufferings and **happiness.**" Another said, "**Christians** should demonstrate their own lifestyles, observe others' needs and help Buddhists in a real way."

The rest said they used a number of methods. They said that Christian retreats, concerts, social work, evangelistic meetings, and media can be used to get people together. Some of them said that Christians should find ways to bring their lives into contact with Buddhists as much as possible. A Christian pastor said:

First, I used evangelistic meetings preached by evangelists and let them contact my post office box. Second, I later changed to Evangelism Explosion III and I followed up new converts by visiting their homes. I started many cell groups in their houses. I went to teach each group the Scriptures, and shared the gospel with new comers in those cell groups. Third, I used evangelistic tracts.

The Christian pastor who shared the above thoughts accepted the fact that these methods did not produce very many converts, but he thought that it is the best at present for his church. Another Christian respondent recommended:

We should use all methods, distribution of tracts, build up relationships, share the gospel at the markets by using posters and personal sharing. Among these methods, relationships must develop in a real way without strings attached.

The response of Buddhists to question E1. **Christians** should inject information bit by bit so Buddhists can digest these bits and reflect on the story. This can be **done softly**, and Christians should expect that fruit will result only after a **long-term** process. One Buddhist mentioned, "**Christians** should use a natural way of witnessing rather than preparing a systematic, complicated **way**." Another one **recommended**, They should not stress elements that are different but rather seek similar elements to bridge the gap of **communication**."

Buddhists said that **If** the teachings of Buddhism are not better than Christianity, Christians should show the better things to Buddhists. One said:

Buddhists want to learn how Christians live their lives better than Buddhists. Buddhists hate narrow-minded Christians. Christians must be able to discuss various topics **with** Buddhists such as politics, law, sports, etc. Words and deeds of Christians must coincide with the perception of Buddhists.

Buddhists shared that **Buddhists'** perceptions require prohibition of religious comparisons, so missionaries and Christians should let Buddhists draw their own conclusion after hearing the gospel. One Buddhist shared:

Thai prefer to draw conclusions **concerning** religion by themselves. Applications of the teachings of the Bible to their daily lives help them to see the power of the gospel. Buddha and Buddhism is *yen* (cool). Christian preaching in Thailand sometimes lacks this element. It is **Roon** (hot). If Christ's teaching brings coolness to **Buddhists'** hearts, then they will wish to hear the message again. At present, Christian preaching is not able to create such a quality.

General statement of responses of all three groups to question E1.

Missionaries knew what they should not do. They shared seven prohibitions, but they were unable to suggest how to witness to Buddhists in concrete ways. The reason behind this, I think, may derive from the answers of Buddhists to question E. Buddhists wanted missionaries and Christians to study culture and religion seriously. Buddhists contributed concrete ideas on how to deal with Buddhists. I asked myself, "Why do they know how to witness to themselves in concrete ways but Thai Christians do not?" There are a number of reasons. One of them was that Thai Christians and missionaries followed the Western style in witnessing. Thai Christians do not seek their own methods. The interview showed that Buddhists needed Christians to explain to them the meaning of the gospel in a clear way that reflects their Thai culture.

The Response of Missionaries, Christians, and Buddhists to Question E2

[Question E2 for missionaries and Christians: In what ways do you share the gospel with the **Thai?**]

[Question E2 for Buddhists is the same as E3 for missionaries and Thai Christians]

The response of missionaries to question E2. Missionaries continued to suggest that when it is time to share the gospel, their ideas and methodologies can be divided into three categories. The first category is that missionaries use evangelistic meetings to gather Buddhists. Then missionaries would preach to Buddhists and give tracts to them. After the meetings were over, missionaries would try to develop relationships with

them. A missionary shared her past experience, "I stood up and preached at the park called **Lumpinee** Park in Bangkok. Then I distributed tracts and persuaded them to sit down and discuss with **me.**"

The second category is to develop a relationship first and ask Buddhists three questions: (1) "**What** do you **see?**" (2) "**What** do you think?" and (3) "**What** will you do about **it?**"

The third one is to use four steps as they mentioned earlier in section E. They are: get to know them, create interest in the **gospel**, share the gospel, and help them to make a decision. It should be noted here that many missionaries repeat these four steps. They mentioned that these four steps are the combinations of: (1) the Four Spiritual Laws, (2) the Bridge diagram of the Navigators, and (3) Evangelism Explosion III.

The response of Christians to **question E2.** Eighteen Christians said they used relationships and lifestyle Christian witness. One Christian said, "I used friendship evangelism." Another Christian said, "I build relationships. I try to understand their basic problems. Then I seek God's help so that I can help them with love and understanding." The presentation of the gospel should flow naturally and smoothly. Methods and strategies, if used, should create smoothness, not **friction**. Methods and strategies, if produced in the West, are usually the cause of Thai Christians not being themselves. Missionaries should use Thai ways of communication. Thai Christians suggested that missionaries and Christians should not attack Buddhism.

The other group of eighteen Christians mentioned that they used various strategies. One said, “I shared the gospel **directly**,” while another said, “I tell them my personal experience and tell them how God changed my **life**.” A Christian respondent mentioned, “I used the Four Spiritual Laws.”

It should be observed here that Thai Christians do not have their own indigenous ways to lead Buddhists to Christ. What they mentioned look like what missionaries shared.

General statement of responses for two groups to question E2. The answers of missionaries and Thai Christians, again, **confirmed** the answers to **E1**. They seemed not to provide concrete strategies in Christian witness. The implication is that missionaries and Christians may know only how to start Christian witness with Buddhists by developing relationships, but they do not know how to deal with them in concrete ways. Missionaries do not explain how to share the gospel. Some of them gave only four principles, and the others suggested three rules for Christian witness. Thai Christians and missionaries rely on **Western** models of evangelism like the Four Spiritual Law, the Navigators, Evangelism Explosion III, and the combinations of them.

The Response of Missionaries, **Christians**, and Buddhists to Question E3

[Question E3 for Thai Christians and E2 for Buddhists: When missionaries or Thai Christians came to witness to you about Christ and/or Christian religion, did you think these people used some methods to persuade you to become a **Christian**?]

[Question E3 for missionaries: When you witnessed about Christ, did you use methods to persuade others to become **Christians**?]

The response of missionaries to question E3. When missionaries were asked about their strategies, they said that in sharing the content of the gospel, they use personal **testimony**, a booklet called "**Four Spiritual Laws**," a scriptural verse from the Book of Romans such as Romans 6:23, literature **after witnessing**, bridge diagram, or continued contact and initiations to have fellowship with other Christians. A bridge diagram shows man is on one side and God is at the other side while a great chasm is between **them**. Man tries to reach God by building a religious bridge, a bridge of doing good works, but man fails. The Cross of Christ bridges this great gap and serves as the solution.

A group of missionaries who work among university students in Bangkok mentioned that they all used four steps as mentioned earlier. One of them explained:

It is difficult for me to answer this question because the question seems to assume that I have a set time that I go out and do **evangelism**. I do not believe in doing "**hit and run**" evangelism. My method can primarily be seen in the four steps that I mentioned above. I just **emphasize** that I believe that step #2, which is creating interest or what some call "finding the open **nerve**" is a critical part of sharing Christ with the Thai person and should never be skipped. When it actually comes to sharing the gospel with them in step **#3**, I use an evangelistic presentation which we have developed ourselves as an organization. Our presentation is a modified version (or is contextualized) of the Evangelism Explosion III presentation, the bridge diagram from the Navigators and the Four Spiritual Laws from Campus Crusade for Christ. This new gospel presentation is our attempt to **contextualize** the message for the Thai people and incorporate the 4 steps of evangelism mentioned earlier.

A missionary said, "I used the Four Spiritual Laws booklets of Campus Crusade for Christ." Another said, "I used **Evangelism Explosion III**

for my Christian **witness.**" One of them continued to share, "I try to keep in my mind where they are spiritually (level of interest) as I talk to them. Sometimes I used a bridge diagram or evangelistic **tracts.**" It should be noted that missionaries repeat their own methods they used. They may not have any other methods. They repeated many times in this section.

Some mentioned that they wanted to **learn** about Christ more from the point of view of the Thai, but at the same time sought an opportunity to make sure that the receptors of the gospel understood terms like "**faith,**" "**trust,**" and "**repentance.**" If possible, missionaries want to train the Thai Christians to do this part of sharing the gospel. But they suggested that new Christians or missionaries should not compromise the concept of the cross of Christ and biblical doctrines. A respondent commented, "**When I** sense that a Buddhist is interested in Christ, I go back and explain repentance and the cost of **discipleship.**" "**Sometimes** hell needs to be mentioned. Sharing love alone without knowing **hell** is not proper," one added.

When asked how they persuaded the Thai to make a decision, they said that that is the duty of the Holy Spirit. Many of them **learn** to combine a number of **Western** methodologies in order to form a new one. Repentance and cost of discipleship need clarification. A missionary said, "I probably am not persuasive enough because I feel that if the Holy Spirit is working in a person's heart, he or she will be asking me **questions.**"

The response of Christians to question E3. **Concerning** the question of what they thought about the method used to persuade others to become

Christians, 25 Christians said that they were aware of a planned encounter while 12 of them did not feel that way. One Christian said, "I sensed that it was not natural at all," while another Christian added, "Surely, I sensed that Christians were trained to do this job, but the methods they used were quite the same and I believed that they robbed the creativity of Christians."

Those who felt that Christian witness was unplanned said, "I personally did not feel that they plan anything." Another commented, "I did not think that Christians plan their methods because all Christians have the same goal--to lead Buddhists to Christ. But someone told me that they used exactly the same **example.**"

The response of Buddhists to question E2. Sixteen Buddhists feel that Christians planned or designed encounters rather than allowed them to occur naturally. One Buddhist said, "It is clear to me that Christians are trained to recite what they remembered. They do not quite understand in their hearts the contents and meanings in each topic they **recited.**" Another Buddhist respondent added, "I feel that it is like they read what they said from a book somewhere and come to tell us." One Buddhist commented:

I think that they planned because I observed that they could not answer my questions. They wanted to speak the things that they are used to. They spoke the same sentences back and forth. It was like they tried to recall something.

Only three Buddhists said no. One said, "I do not feel that way," while another said, "It came out of their lives and their own thoughts."

General statement of responses to question E3 for missionaries and Christians. and to question E2 for Buddhists. Missionaries agreed that they all used some methods from the West and that their intention in Christian witness was to share and clarify the meanings of the gospel. Most Buddhist respondents and 50 percent of Thai Christians agreed that Christians who came to witness to them used some planned **encounters**. They did not share from their **convictions**," they said. The interview answers of this section seemed to point out that: (1) missionaries and Thai Christians do not study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously, (2) Thai Christians followed missionaries **Westernized** methods in Christian witness. This influence was so great that they did not develop their own.

The Response of Missionaries. Christians. and Buddhists to Question E4

[Question E4 for missionaries and Christians: What were your feelings **concerning** the Christian **witness**?]

[Question E3 for Buddhists: What were your feelings **concerning** the Christian **witness**?]

The response of missionaries to question E4. All Missionaries were frustrated, **awkward**, discouraged. But they said that they should not express these feelings in anger. They stated that **it** took patience because Thai people had a strong desire for freedom and **independence**. In a situation like this, missionaries easily lost their vision and got caught up in various ministries in their own lives. They needed to be constantly stirred. One missionary said, "I have been frustrated and discouraged. It takes patience, I

think. Thai people appreciate when **concern** is shown for their lives. Thai people have a strong desire for freedom and independence. They cannot be **forced**." One missionary respondent **added**, "I felt awkward. In an atmosphere like this, it is easy for missionaries to lose their vision and do other busy things in their own lives just to keep them busy so that we know we accomplish something, and forget about the needs around us.

Missionaries need to be stirred **constantly**."

The response of Christians to question E4. The majority of Thai Christians said that the present methods are unfruitful because missionaries and Christians use planned witness and do it systematically. They should not propagandize religions or keep on encountering Buddhists aggressively when they wanted to follow up. A Christian professor shared her idea:

Christians try to prepare themselves for planned Christian witness and they witness systematically. I feel that they lack **self-initiative** (*Kuam Pen tuao Kong Tuo Eng*). The Thai called this method *Tuu* (keep on nagging). This method leads to **Bua** (**uncomfortableness**) and *Seng* (do not want to listen to the gospel).

One Christian added, "I felt that I was nagged (*Tuu*) with the gospel by Christians. The result of being *Tuu* led me to feel tired and uncomfortable (**Bua**) and I did not want to meet them and listen to the gospel (*Seng*). Close follow-up of some Buddhists will cause them **Ud-ad** (to feel pressure in their hearts)."

They suggested that missionaries and Christians should allow receptors of the gospel to grasp the truth by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Missionaries and Christians should **discern** when the Holy Spirit is working

in the lives of Buddhists. They should continue to show interest in Buddhists' welfare, economics, and families as well as in their spiritual lives. Prayers will open Buddhists' eyes. One Christian said **concerning** witnessing, **"It** is not natural. Many of them are ahead of the Holy Spirit. They persuade Buddhists aggressively, as if the Holy Spirit lacks persuasive **power."**

**Concerning** the reaction to Christian witness at present, thirteen Christians said it is fine, but twenty of them mentioned that they have weaknesses. Those weaknesses cause Christian witness to suffer from: (1) lack of **ingenuity**, (2) too much **westernization**, (3) lack of human **dimension**, (4) lack of smoothness, (5) superficial attack on Buddhists, (6) good news **tuned** to bad news through Buddhists' eyes when Christians start attacking Buddhism, (7) pushing and threatening Buddhists about hell. This way of presenting the gospel is not natural but manipulates Buddhists to accept Christ. The method seems to lack elasticity. One said, They should observe and minister to Buddhists to the whole **person--their** welfare, economics, spiritual being, and **families."** One Christian commented, **"I** feel that Christian witness lacks elasticity. It does not adjust itself to fit the needs of hearers or **situations."**

The response of Buddhists to question E3. When asked what they feel **concerning** Christian witness, Buddhists said that the message was not communicated to them, especially by those posters on the trees along the roads which said **"Jesus'** blood cleanses our **sin."** One said, The way

Christians propagate their religion is very strange to Buddhists. Christianity, as Buddhists see it, can not fit well with all classes of people in Thailand because they do not adapt to it at all."

Some Christians are trained to speak well, but some do not speak from their hearts and **concerns**. A Buddhist said:

They sometimes memorize what they are supposed to speak. Therefore when asked to clarify, they repeat the same thing, a response which is not satisfactory to Buddhists. Some of them witness like they walk around a bush, in circular fashion. They keep on saying something which they alone understand. They repeat something such as "**Christ** died on the **cross**" many times. They are not creative at all. They seem to be under the pressure of the contents they are supposed to share.

Buddhists require missionaries to leave the matter so Thai Christians can think by themselves. A Buddhist advised, "**Buddhists** want to see real things or real persons **who** have been changed by the power of Christ. Buddhists want to touch, see, and taste **Christ**."

General statement of responses to question E4 for missionaries and Christians and E3 for Buddhists. Missionaries, Thai Christians and Buddhists were frustrated because Buddhists did not accept the gospel they shared. Buddhists suffered because the methods used by missionaries and Thai Christians were improper. Both groups knew that this might be a communication problem. But they seemed not to know how to improve or develop new solutions.

#### The Response of Missionaries and Christians to Question E5

[Question E5 for missionaries and Christians: Please tell me about your ideas after seeing "Like Payap" (Thai traditional opera, conducted by the Department of Mass Communication, Payap

University, **Cheingmai, Thailand**. Payap University is a **Christian** university, established by the Church of Christ in Thailand. Like Payap is one of the most well known **contextualizations** of the **gospel**).]

The response of missionaries to question E5. The majority of missionaries **said** that **"Like Payap"** is good for communicating the gospel in the Thai way. One missionary said, **"Like Payap'** is a good traditional Thai drama for communicating the gospel, especially among people in rural areas." However, most plays have not integrated the content of the gospel in the Christian message. Another shared thus, **"But** most plays **I** have seen thus far provide biblical solutions to contemporary problems rather than demonstrate the content of the gospel." It should be noted that some missionaries are more **concerned** about the content of the gospel as it is recorded in the Scriptures rather than the power of the gospel demonstrated smoothly to solve contemporary problems. It seems to me that missionaries want to see the show present the gospel to Thais rather than applying of the gospel to touch human problems.

The response of Christians to question E5. Thirty-four Christians answered this question. Seven Christians did not know "Like **Payap**." Twenty of them who knew it said it was a good indigenous medium for communicating the gospel. One Christian respondent commented, **"It** is very good because it fits the needs of the Thai. **I** was impressed with **'Like Payap'** because **I** saw it performed **while I** was a **Buddhist**. It was communicated to **me**." Another one responded, "I think it was good because the Thai are interested in the **'Like'**." The rest of them mentioned that they were not quite

sure because they did not hear positive responses from Buddhists who saw **"Like Payap."** A Christian commented, **"I** think it fits well with people in rural areas, or even rural people who live in urban areas. In Bangkok, people are interested in concerts, Rock music more than the **'Like'.**" One added, **"It** is OK for some groups of people, but not for all the **Thai."**

General statement of responses of two groups to question E5. Both groups agreed that **'Like Payap'** is a good example of indigenous media to communicate the gospel to the Thai.

The **response** of Buddhists to question E4

[Question E4 for Buddhists: In your opinion, when listening about Christianity, whom do you want to hear **from?**]

Thirteen Buddhists answered this question. Fifty percent preferred to hear from mature Christians who have credibility. They explained that credibility is most important for Christian witness because it can be understood and accepted by receptors of the gospel. Fifteen percent mentioned that they like Christians who are of the same age to witness to them. The rest of the respondents did not care. They said that the ability to communicate is more important than age.

It should be concluded that mature Christians who have credibility and ability to communicate the gospel are preferred by Buddhists.

The response of Buddhists to **question E5**

[Question E5 for Buddhists: Can missionaries and Thai Christians improve their presentation of the gospel so the Thai will feel positive about the gospel? If so, **how?**]

All Buddhist respondents said **"yes,"** especially when Christians come with open hearts to learn and do not come with hidden agendas or try to change people's religion. Buddhists mentioned that Christians must understand each listener. More than this, they should use reason in the Buddhist way to explain their faith so the Thai feel good about Christianity.

It should be noted that Buddhists required listening hearts, understanding minds, and reasons from missionaries and Thai Christians in Christian witness. They suggested that Christians should not come with attitudes of targeting to change the religion of receptors but to learn from them. They added that Christians should pay attention to the needs of the context.

#### The Response of Missionaries, **Christians,** and Buddhists to Question E6

[Question E6: In your opinion what is the way for a new convert to tell his or her family about **Christ?**]

The response of missionaries to question E6. They suggested the best way for new Christians to share their faith with their parents must be a meek way. They suggested that new Christians should not share with their parents immediately but learn the Bible from mature Christians so they would know how to tell their parents and how to answer some of their questions. One missionary said:

Presently, I do not encourage new converts to immediately tell their family about their decision for Christ. Rather I encourage them to continue to study the Bible and learn more so that when they eventually do share with their family about the decision they will be able knowledgeably to answer questions that may arise. I also discourage them from telling their family immediately because the initial persecution that they might receive could

be enough to cause them to **quit** spending time with their Christian friends as well as to renounce their decision for Christ.

Using **Christians'** lifestyles and **learning** how to **wait** for a right time before sharing Christ is important. Some missionaries recommended a safe period, as long as three months, prior to telling parents. A missionary commented, "I do not think they have to do it immediately. They should **wait.**" Another added, "I think they should wait for three **months.**"

New Christians should not teach their parents but should allow time to lead them and share with their parents slowly and bit by bit. When an appointed time comes to tell them, new Christians should not compromise but speak frankly and honestly with a loving attitude and then wait for reactions. One added, "**Be** completely honest, be loving, and do not compromise."

The response of Christians to question E6. **Concerning how to** witness to parents, they suggested that the quality of life of new Christians must demonstrate the things of Christ to parents. Life must change in a real way. Parents must realize that their children are changed for the better **internally.** A Christian respondent said:

New Christians should demonstrate their Christian lives to their parents and families so that they will see the differences between Christian lives and Buddhist lives in a clear way. This changed life and politeness in their Christian witness may lead their parents to be interested in Christ.

One added, "They should softly tell them with a language of their changed lives." Children should not argue or speak too much. They should work harder and be responsible in duties required by their parents. They

should honor their parents and take good care of them. If possible, they should invite those of the same age to share the gospel when needed. They should talk reasonably and be polite rather than keep on talking or nagging with witnessing when parents are not open to their children. They should avoid an atmosphere of **"Bua"** or **"Seng"** or **"Na Ram Kam."** One shared, They should demonstrate their ethical lives. Do not talk about God all the time. This leads Buddhists to feel *Bua* or **Na Ram Kam (irritated).**"

The response of Buddhists to question E6. Eleven Buddhists answered this question. Only two of them mentioned that new converts should go back home and tell their parents frankly. A Buddhist said, **"One day, I believe, new converts have to tell their parents anyway, so why don't they tell them frankly?"** Another **added,** Tell them frankly; **I think that new converts' parents will not be angry."**

Among eleven of them, there was only one who said that he did not mind for his child to embrace Christianity. He said, **"I do not blame my child at all in becoming a Christian."** The majority suggested that new converts **apologize** to their parents for any grief they cause them as a result of becoming Christians. After that, they should begin to live their new lifestyles and allow parents to know bit by bit through their lives how good Jesus Christ is. Witnessing in words comes later. A Buddhist respondent said, **"I suggest that new converts slowly tell their parents, apologize to them and show their lifestyles."** One added, **"New converts should apologize to their**

parents for causing them grief and sorrow, but their lifestyles will confirm later on that Christianity brings good things to their **children.**"

General statement of the responses of all three groups to question E6.

Missionaries' strategies are **concerned** with the survival of their new converts rather than the **concern** of their parents. Training new converts for three months and then sharing directly **with** parents will save the spiritual life of new converts. Missionaries suggested further that when the time comes, new converts should share frankly and honestly with their parents.

Buddhists mentioned a new way. New converts should apologize to their parents because they are the ones who cause grief and pain for their parents. Sharing Christ through their lifestyles can be done immediately, but sharing the gospel message verbally should be done bit by bit. All groups agreed that showing lifestyles to parents is necessary in Christian witness.

The **Response** of Missionaries, **Christians**, and **Buddhists** to Question E7

[Question E7: What way of presenting the gospel would most appeal to **Buddhists**?]

The response of missionaries to question E7. The last question in this section to missionaries asks what is the most appealing way to present the gospel to Buddhists. The respondents mentioned that if they can help persons see they can really benefit from a relationship with Christ and truly need Him, then any gospel presentation is likely to work. Missionaries continued to explain that they found many Buddhists do not have a deep understanding of sin because they are only required not to break the five precepts in Buddhism. In evangelizing Buddhists, it is helpful to let them see

that one can sin in many other ways besides breaking those five precepts, for example being selfish, lustful, greedy, etc. A missionary who works with university students in Bangkok said:

I do not have a particular answer to this question because I have found that Buddhists are not particularly **concerned** with my theology as much as they are with the practical application of my faith in daily life. If I can help a person see that they can really benefit from a relationship with **Christ** and that they truly need him, then any gospel presentation is likely to work. I have found that many Buddhists do not have a deep understanding of sins because they are only required not to break five **commandments**. It is helpful in evangelizing Buddhists to help them see that one can sin in many other ways besides just breaking those five commandments.

Missionaries want to give Buddhists true hope, agape love, humility of Christ, forgiveness of sin through the death of Christ, and full purpose and meaning in life. They understand that the most appealing ways must not be offensive to the cross. A missionary respondent said, "**Missionaries** should show true hope, divine love, Christlikeness, forgiveness of sin, and humility to **Buddhists**." Only one of them said Evangelism Explosion **III** is the best.

Showing them the depravity of men is necessary. Mentioning the spirit **world** is revealing to Buddhists; they can be told that Jesus Christ has more power than ghosts. A cold or forceful method of evangelism should not be used. A missionary commented, "Lifestyle evangelism, not just cold evangelism is preferred." Missionaries should be excited about their own faith and share with Buddhists their joy in Christ. One added, "We have to be excited about our faith and share the gospel with a joyful **heart**."

The response of Christians to question E7. Nineteen Christians mentioned that they should develop relationships and show their good lives to Buddhists. One Christian mentioned, **"Build** up a good relationship and show good examples in our lives of such qualities as politeness and **mercy.**" Another **said**, "Be friends to them and know their lives **thoroughly.**" The rest of them suggested presenting the gospel through media. One of them shared, "I think that **drama**, songs, and movies are among media that can be used as instruments to lead Buddhists to Christ," while another Christian said, **"Art** works can be used too." They suggested that Christians should demonstrate and apply the gospel to fit the needs of the Thai. This can be done by starting with the things that interest and benefit them. One Christian respondent added:

Many Buddhists do not understand how the truth of the gospel relates to their needs. Christians should be able to demonstrate the relationship between the two. The presentation of the gospel must be beneficial to them.

The response of Buddhists to question E7. Buddhists mentioned that Christians should demonstrate the gospel in such a way that Buddhists experience the power of quietness and peace in their hearts. A Buddhist said, **"If** the gospel helped Buddhists to gain what they seek in Buddhism, it would be communicable and reasonable. Buddhists seek an escape from suffering, quiet minds, and *Kham Loom Yen* (cooled shade of life), happiness." Another Buddhist added, **"When** they teach us, they should explain in a deep and thorough way. Please do not assume that we

automatically understand all things. No, we do not. They should allow us to think and make our own judgment. We can decide by **ourselves.**"

**Christians'** words and deeds should coincide. Buddhists added that **missionaries** and Thai Christians should know how to apply the Scriptures to be profitable to Thais' lives. Another said, "Be **sincere**, show lifestyles, do not compare **religions.**" One of them said, "**Buddhists** prefer to think by themselves and make decisions by themselves. Christian persuasiveness helps us to think whether Christianity is really good for us or not."

General statement of the responses of all three groups to **question E7.**

Missionaries knew how to witness in general concepts, but not in concrete or contextual ways. They said that if Buddhists understood the concept of sin and knew the benefits they would receive from God, they would come to Christ. However, missionaries were unable to explain how they could help Buddhists to understand that concept. What missionaries did in actual witnessing was to show Buddhists how they lived far away from God by committing their sins and how Jesus has more power than ghosts.

Christians suggested also that they knew theoretically how to witness to Buddhists. First, they suggested that they should develop relationships with Buddhists. Second, Christians should apply the gospel to fit the needs of Buddhists' lives. But they did not state how to do it. The only concrete idea they shared is to present the gospel through indigenous media: drama, movie, "**Like,**" and art works.

Buddhists were able to suggest areas such as demonstrating the gospel in such a way that it brings peace and quietness into Buddhists' hearts. Buddhists suggested that **missionaries** and Christians should tell them and explain the gospel to them and let them experience the truth in Christianity by themselves. They left this idea for missionaries and Christians to solve and apply in concrete ideas.

Why do missionaries and Thai Christians not know how to witness to Buddhists in concrete ways? The problem seems to have various sources: (1) they do not study culture and religion; (2) Christian witness is fixed, and they think what they are using now is correct and biblical; they do not try a new way but keep on using the old ways; (3) they do not ask Buddhists; (4) they follow missionaries.

General conclusion of the responses of all three groups to question

E1 - E7. Missionaries suggested sharing Christian faith by developing relationships, showing lifestyles and love, and being available to Buddhists. They mentioned elements which prohibit witnessing to the Thai, such as manipulation, anger, demanding more from Buddhists' lives, and making them lose face.

In actual witnessing, missionaries used **Western** strategies. The first strategy is to: (1) get to know them, (2) create interest in them, (3) share the gospel with them, and (4) help them to make a decision. The second strategy is to conduct an evangelistic meeting and build relationships with those who show interest in the gospel.

They said they would pay attention to help Buddhists understand the meaning of **"faith,"** "trust," and **"repentance "** New converts should receive training for three months and then share the gospel directly and honestly with their **parents.**

**Missionaries** felt frustrated, discouraged, and awkward because they could not understand why the Thai do not understand the gospel and come to Christ. They agreed that their ministry is to help Buddhists know the concept of sin and the benefits of a relationship with Christ.

They agreed that the gospel should be presented through "Like **Payap.**" Indigenous media should be used.

Thai Christians suggested that they should start witnessing by developing relationships **with** Buddhists and demonstrate the teachings in the Bible through their lives. They should not let Buddhists feel *Seng, Bua, or Udd* **Ad** . Thai cultural elements should not be neglected and can be used to lead Buddhists to Christ. Gospel presentation should start at similar contact points between Buddhism and Christianity. The gospel can be presented through media and must be related to life.

New converts should demonstrate to their parents that their real change is not religious but in their inner lives. They should work harder in their homes and demonstrate that Christian teachings are beneficial to their families. Argument is prohibited, but they should explain in polite ways the reason why they choose Christianity when the time comes. Christians

suggested that inviting older people to witness to parents is wise and may be suitable.

Buddhists also were frustrated in **hearing** the gospel. They did not like the method used to present the gospel by missionaries and Christians. They gave solutions as follows: (1) study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously, (2) designed and **pre-packaged** encounters should be avoided, (3) listen and **learn** from Buddhists, and (4) improve credibility of the gospel **communicators**.

Thai Christians and missionaries should find good things in Thai culture and Buddhism, to use as contact points. Thus their Christian witness may be shaped in Thai ways.

Christians should share the gospel from their conviction and from their own hearts. Christians should listen to the needs of the Buddhists, to the way they think and understand. Christians and missionaries should not be explicit in their intention of changing Buddhists' religion. They should bring peace and quietness to Buddhists and **let** Buddhists experience and understand the gospel. Buddhists will use their freedom and **turn** to Christ by themselves. They suggested that the context needs to be studied.

#### A Summary Conclusion of the Responses of AH Groups to Question A-E

The interview results show that American missionaries who live in Thailand and Thai Christians are aware of both the aggression and the meekness of missionaries in the past. The majority of both groups do not want to follow any of the practices of the past. Both Thai Christians and

**missionaries** are able to answer correctly regarding the steps they **should** follow in building relationships to bring the Thai to Christ. In contrast in **real** situations, they encounter anxiety, awkward feelings, frustrations in Christian witness. In **practice**, they do not know how to apply what they know in order to see real **results**.

Historical research, interview results and library research suggested that missionaries and **Thai** pastors should take familiar roles within their society. Their role and status will help them to build relationships, to know the needs of the social networks, and to become insiders in the society in later years. Missionaries are able to study Thai **culture** and Buddhism naturally through interaction in Thai society. When missionaries and Thai Christians would like to contribute benefits and help to a community, they can do so through the structural system in the community.

Thai Christians are able to understand Thai culture in a deeper way than missionaries. They gave clues for applying Thai cultural and religious values to Christian witness. Again in practice, however, they do not know how to apply their knowledge. The reason behind this fact is that the methodology **"know how"** in applying their knowledge to the context requires the knowledge of the context itself. Missionaries may not know that the context itself determines their effectiveness in Christian witness.

Missionaries and Thai Christians do not study Thai culture and Buddhism seriously. Their theology may be another factor. The majority of missionaries in Thailand belong to the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand

and the Southern Baptist Mission. **They** are quite certain that what they are doing is the right way. They do not imagine how they can utilize Thai culture and Buddhism in their Christian witness. Some of them consider any methods that move toward Thai culture and Buddhism as syncretism and need to be discarded.

Thai Christians witness exactly (like missionaries). All methods used by the Thai Christians are **Western** methods, or involve some combination of them. Nowhere is there found a practical fruitful indigenous method in Thai churches although there surely must be one here or there in some parts of Thailand unknown to me. Generally speaking, the churches in Thailand are growing more than in the past. The present statistics and observation show that all denominations are growing at the same rate. The percentage of Christian population is the same, 0.6 percent. I believe that a major growth of the Thai churches must derive from a change in witnessing to Buddhists. I also believe that if the gospel and its method of presentation are **contextualized**, we may see a major growth of the church in Thailand.

The interview results and the analysis can be summarized as follows. *First* most missionaries do not have a good attitude toward Buddhism. They do not want to express their ideas explicitly, but they think in their hearts that Buddhism is evil and from **Satan**, e.g. is idol worship. The origin is satanic though they agree that some teachings are good. Because of this belief, they do not want to spend time studying Buddhism in depth. They do not want to study Thai culture seriously either because Thai culture has

elements of Buddhism at its core. **Ethnocentrism** is one of many factors preventing missionaries from studying Thai culture. Ninety-five percent of missionaries who live in Thailand are evangelical, but they are not aware of cross-cultural communication. They are not acquainted with contextual theology. They do not see significance in Thai cultural and religious values. Their theological education does not prepare them to seriously consider this subject. Thai Christians always follow missionaries. Thai Christians do not want to study Buddhism and Thai culture seriously either. This mentality hinders them from finding any good things or contact points for passing on the gospel. If they find one, they are afraid of syncretism.

*Second*, missionaries are work-oriented. They work more diligently than most Thai Christians. Their sacrificial lives, hard work, responsibility, and high commitment are admirable. They work seriously in all of their responsibilities. Thai Christians are not like missionaries in this mentality. They are relational people, but Thai Christians follow missionaries in their Christian witness. Why? Because missionaries are always leaders in Thailand in the area of Christian witness. This may be one of the reasons why there have always been tensions in the minds of both missionaries and Thai Christians in their Christian witness. Many Thai Christians can not continue in such hard work for a long period of time for various reasons. They may lack commitment, or the strategies designed by missionaries using **Western** methods may not fit their **worldview** and mentality. They know what does not work, but missionaries want to keep using unsuccessful

methods because they have a high commitment. Both groups are thus frustrated, discouraged, and awkward. This may be one of many reasons why Thai Christians joined various movements and embraced various ideas spread from the **Western** countries without seriously considering their own methods. American people like certainty. Their methods can be laid down in order, one, two, and three. They design carefully in order to accomplish good results. They do not seem to realize that **if** the gospel flows along the grain of the Thai cultural context, the friction of cross-cultural communication will be decreased. At present, the meaning of the gospel cuts across the grain of Thai culture. Thai people have difficulty understanding the gospel clearly.

While missionaries are building relationships, they think of the process as work, but Buddhists require relationship as relationship. They would erect a wall or a barrier immediately if they knew the person with whom they are talking has a hidden agenda **in** building a relationship with them. Missionaries and Thai Christians are deliberately building relationships because they want to find needs of Buddhists so they can help them and lead them to Christ. A better way, however, is to build a relationship with no strings attached. The duty of conversion belongs to the Holy Spirit. The Christian's duty is to point people to Christ and demonstrate **Christlikeness** so Buddhists may move toward Christ.

*Third*, missionaries think that a successful Christian witness is to be equated with the success of bringing the content of the gospel into the minds

of the Thai to help them understand the content as clearly as they can, whereas in actuality the Thai understand through their affective domain **first**. The Thai may say, "I feel, therefore **I am.**" **For** the Thai, religion is felt, not **intellectualized**. A successful Christian witness, therefore, occurs not when the content of the gospel penetrates to the cognitive domain first, but when the Thai feel happy, good, and benefited when hearing the gospel. Thai people always understand through feelings first which is similar to John Wesley's observation of the English people of his **day**. Thai Christians can witness successfully and easily if only they are allowed by missionaries to witness on their own. Now they follow missionaries, and they cannot seem to think adequately without encouragement from missionaries and Thai churches.

**Fourth**, the way missionaries come to know Christ is entirely different from the Thai way. For the Thai, barriers are numerous. Opposing forces from social networks are real. Individual conversion, introduced by missionaries, appears aggressive in the perception of social networks in Thailand. Family conversions are encouraged and can be accomplished by not only developing a relationship with an individual but with the entire group of the whole family for a long period of time. When the social group becomes acquainted with missionaries and the church people, this process decreases opposition. The gospel must be applicable to daily lives. If Christianity is better than Buddhism, Christians must be better persons than Buddhists. It takes a long time for a Thai to know Christ. Christian lifestyles

are the key factors in influencing Buddhists for Christ. Currently, **Christians'** lives and words do not seem to be consistent, at least from the perspective of Buddhists.

*Fifth*, missionaries feel that they are always outsiders. This feeling may be the result of lack of studying Thai culture and Buddhism. The majority of Thai Christians feel that they too are outside their social networks. They tend to follow missionaries' examples of not studying their own culture seriously.

*Sixth*, missionaries do not have Thai co-workers **with** whom they can consult in their incarnational ministry. They must find Thai co-workers from whom they can **learn**, with whom they can discuss, and **with** whom they can cooperate. Any churches, organizations, institutions which presently allow qualified and **well-trained** indigenous people to perform their own tasks without interference of missionaries will no doubt see new growth.

### Summary

Chapter 5 is **concerned** with the interview results. Five open-ended questions were designed to draw out the ideas of missionaries, Thai Christians, and Buddhists who are presently in Thailand. I intend to observe closely the relationships among three factors: **(1)** the demonstration of meekness of missionaries, (2) the perception of the Thai, and (3) their responsiveness.

The large amount of information received from the interviews reveals major factors which can be used in designing a meek approach to Christian

witness in Thailand. The differences between **American** and Thai cultural and religious values control Thai Buddhists' and American **missionaries'** mentality and behaviors, which, are poles apart. These behavioral elements-mannerisms, verbalisms, and attitudes, when interacting with each other, produce friction in **cross-cultural** communication. The message of the gospel does not get across to the receptors. Major factors that related to cross-cultural Christian witness are: **(1)** a humble attitude of missionaries and Thai Christians toward Buddhism is required, **(2)** a new attitude of missionaries and Thai Christians toward Thai culture; missionaries are work oriented-not relational oriented, this mentality needs to be adjusted, **(3)** time for diffusion of the gospel, **(4)** a presentation of the gospel which brings benefits and help, not challenge and threat to the Thai, **(5)** a long-term, **genuine**, and sincere relationship with Buddhists **with** no strings attached, **(6)** credibility of missionaries, Christians, and the church which bring the audience's acceptance of the gospel, **(7)** meaningful indigenous methods of presentation of the gospel, **(8)** family-focused evangelism, **(9)** a demonstration of social **concern**, and **(10)** a suitable role and status of missionaries and Thai Christians in Thai society.

Missionaries do not have a correct attitude toward Buddhism. They are work oriented and want to accomplish their work. The relationships developed by them are seen only as a means to accomplish the task. This is why their relationships are not perceived by Buddhists as genuine. The content of the gospel is not understandable to the Thai. Factors that lead

**missionaries** to know Christ are vastly different from those that lead the Thai to come to Christ. The church should consider winning whole groups rather than individuals. Missionaries always feel that they are **outsiders**, and they have no Thai co-workers with whom to consult. These factors serve as frictional elements in cross-cultural communication of Christian witness in Thailand.

We **turn** now to a proposal for Christian witness to the Thai built upon the pervasive Thai value of meekness and fleshed out in the light of the results from our research discussed in Chapters 2-5.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Meekness: A New Approach to Christian Witness to the Thai**

This chapter contains a design for a meek approach with the suggestion that missionaries and Thai Christians consider this new approach. Data from Chapters 2-5 have been used to design this new approach. I also back up my argument with ideas of some scholars. I will argue that my new approach is necessary as an **alternative** to Christian witness in **Thailand**, using explanation and reasons from the Scripture. I intend to convince missionaries as well as Thai Christians of a better way for their own ministries for Christian witness in Thailand.

Much of the dissertation so **far** from Chapters 2-5 has seemingly proven how difficult it is for American missionaries and even Thai Christians who have been influenced by **Western** methods to **learn** how to practice evangelism using the Thai meekness approach. Before launching into the new method, I want to assure readers that it can be done.

In this chapter I want to show that it is possible for missionaries and Thai Christians to **learn** how to use the new approach to Christian witness to the Thai. With Christ, all things are possible. The Holy Spirit will open the eyes of missionaries and Thai Christians to see the way through this difficult task. Completely trusting in God's words will help missionaries and Thai Christians assure their source of power to work in human hearts.

A **“meek”** approach is not a **“weak”** approach. It is rather a biblical approach. I would like to ask missionaries and Thai Christians to withhold

their judgment while they are reading this chapter. I also would like them, at least, to try to apply this new approach by conversing on religious matters with some Buddhists, even aggressive ones who may have had bad or negative **experiences** with some aggressive Christians in the past. They will begin to see a new and positive reaction from the Buddhists which may set a new hope for Christians.

The present approach used in Thailand is a mixture of **Western** cultures and a theological approach which may not fit Thai cultural and religious values. Jesus is meek, and meekness is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). A combination of Thai culture and biblical approach is more practical to the Thai than the current combination of **western** culture and theological approach.

#### A Revisit and **Reframing** of the Christian Message from Biblical Sources

This section argues that if Christ were a missionary in Thailand, he would use the meek approach to witness to the Thai. It helps missionaries and Thai Christians to learn what the incarnational model looks like when performed by Christ in Thai culture. Why do I say this? It is because Scripture passages support my argument. Missionaries and Thai Christians must allow Christ's meekness to be the model for our ways of witnessing. This section describes biblical meekness or Christ's meekness as required in the Christian witness in Thailand. Culturally speaking, it is effective because it approaches the affective domain of the Thai. I have studied the concept of meekness from the Old and the New Testaments. I have also

observed the meanings from (1) Webster's **International** Dictionary (1957), (2) examination of the Scripture passages where the biblical term is used, and (3) the New **International Dictionary** of New Testament Theology Vol. 2 (Brown 1986: 256-257), and Dictionary of the Bible (Davis 1954).

Meekness is one of the marks of the humility of Christ. It is also grounded more fundamentally in the interrelationships of the **Trinity**. It is the sum of the earthly incidents and physical restrictions to which Christ was subjected, such as birth, education, passion, as distinguished from the incidents, such as **resurrection**, ascension, glorification which constitute the exaltation of Christ (Webster **1957:1213**).

Meekness is a mark of true discipleship and does not imply a weak or vacillating nature (Tenney 1963:522). It means gentleness, humility, consideration, mild friendliness. It is a quality shown by friends, while stern harshness may be expected from an enemy (Brown 1986:256).

Meekness applies to those who would rather suffer wrong than do wrong and who therefore enjoy God's favor (Numbers **12:3**). Believers are commanded to be meek and to show a lowly spirit to one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; Titus 3:2) and to unbelievers, especially when making a defense to everyone who asks Christians to give an account **for** the hope that is in them (I Peter **3:15**).

A teacher should be meek and gentle when correcting those who are in opposition, that God may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth (II Timothy 2:25).

Meekness is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23) and a characteristic of Jesus (Matthew **11:29**; II Corinthians 10:1). Jesus Himself was sent to minister to the meek (Psalm 45:4; Isaiah **11:4**; 29:19; **Zephaniah** 2:3). God assures help for those who are meek; they will receive ultimate victory (Psalms 22:26; 25:9; **37:11**).

God also will beautify the meek with salvation (Psalm **149:4**). This concept is opposed to unbridled anger, harshness, and brutality. It represents character traits of the **noble-minded**, the wise man who remains meek in the face of insult, the judge who is lenient in judgment, and the king who is kind in his rule (Brown 1986: 256-257). Those who want to serve the Lord and those who want to come to the Lord must clothe themselves with all humility, with tears and with trials (Acts 20:19). They must have this mind among themselves (**Philippians** 2:5). Jesus Christ shows the meaning of self-humiliation by becoming obedient unto death, even the utmost shame of the cross. He had no other support than the incredible promise of the faithfulness of God (Psalms 22; 25:18; 31:17; 90:3; **119:50,92,150**).

Paul's exhortation to humility is also rooted in the effective reality of Christ. Romans 12:16 **warns** against haughtiness and recommends, "give yourselves to humble **tasks**" or "**associate** with the lowly." Jesus Christ had to be meek in order to provide salvation to the whole world (Philippians 2). The foundation of this promise, admonition and **warning** is found in **Jesus'** own way of life as he interpreted it in his invitation in Matthew **11:28ff**. He is meek and lowly in heart. The two thoughts stand parallel and show that

Jesus was submissive before God, completely dependent upon him and at the same time humble before men whose servant and helper he had become (Luke 22:27; Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28).

Matthew 18:1-5 with its teaching on humility shows that **Jesus'** call to discipleship should not be confused with ethical attainment. The command to humble ourselves like the child placed among the disciples does not mean that we lessen our worth in God's **sight**. Rather, humility is to know how lowly we are before God. At the same time the use of the word "**child**" is a reminder of the Father in heaven.

The meaning of meekness as mentioned earlier is synthesized from (1) Webster's International Dictionary (1957), (2) examination of the Scripture passages where biblical terms are used, and (3) the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol. 2 (Brown 1986: 256-257).

I also studied four Hebrew and four Greek words where these are used both in the Old and New Testaments. Two sources are used: (1) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains (Vol. 1&2) (Louw and Nida 1988), (2) A Concordance to the Greek Testament (Moulton and Geden 1978). The Hebrew words are: עֲנָוָה ('anevah) gentleness, meekness, עֲנָוָה (anavah) humility, meekness, עָנָו ('anāv) depressed, gentle, i.e. in mind or **circumstances**, i.e. needy, humble, lowly and meek, עֲנָה ('ānāh) gentleness, humble. The Greek words are:

πραυπαθεια **gentleness**, πραύς gentle, kind, **mild**, πραύτης kindness, mildness, gentleness, and πραύς **gentle**, kind. The synthesis of meanings of these eight words can be classified in relation to five categories as follow: (1) God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, (2) believers and non-believers, (3) culture, (4) circumstances, and (5) the blessing from God. The semantic meaning is outlined below.

Meekness and humility are usually used to show the state or quality of the heart or the inner life while gentleness is used as the product of that quality of life. Gentleness can be seen in many forms while humility and meekness are the meanings of those forms. Meekness is the attitude of the heart in believers who are calm under high pressure, criticism, and circumstances so that the will and purpose of God can be fulfilled through them for the whole community. Gentleness can be expressed through calmness without saying a word as exemplified through Moses who stood quietly in front of Miriam and Aaron who criticized him (Numbers **12:3**) or Jesus in front of Pilate. Meekness can be expressed culturally through words and deeds which bring calmness, sweetness, and rest to others. Opposites of meekness are rough, hard, violent, anger/angry, aggression, contentiousness, and maliciousness (Matthew **11:28-30**; Colossians 3:5, **8**, 12; II Corinthians **10:1**; Titus 3:2). I will expand upon the meaning of "meekness" in the following section.

First, meekness or humility is the quality of believers' hearts who seek the Lord (Numbers 22:26) and fear him (Proverbs **15:33**; 22:4). God is able

to provide grace (Proverbs 3:34), salvation (Psalms **149:4**), support (Psalms 147:6), safe **journey** (Ezra **8:21**), healing of the land (II Chronicles 7:4), and answers to prayer (Daniel **10:12**) for those who are meek. This quality can be perceived through testing and suffering (Deuteronomy 8:16). Meekness is very precious in his sight (I Peter 3:4) because it is the same quality seen in the life of Jesus Christ. The opposite of humility is pride which God hates (Job 40:12; Proverbs 18:12). Jesus is meek (Matthew **11:29**). Meekness is a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). Those who are humble allow God to lead their lives in his own way and direction and they keep his commandments (Deuteronomy 8:2). God asks all believers to clothe themselves with humility (I Peter 5:6) so he can give them wealth, honor, and life (Proverbs 22:4), sustain them (Psalms 147:6), and crown them with salvation (Psalms 149:4).

Second, meekness is the imperishable quality of Christian hearts (I Peter 3:4; Colossians 3:12) which produces gentle, soft, mild, submissive and compassionate attitudes (I Peter 5:5; 3:8) which in turn bring about **gentle** behavior toward Christians (I Peter 5:5) and **non-Christians** (I Peter 3:15), **especially** to those who are ignorant and make mistakes (Hebrew 5:22; **Ephesians** 4:2). Meekness can be manifested outwardly by speaking softly, not raising one's voice, taking a low position (Luke **1:52**; **Philippians** 2), or living in circumstances regarded as characteristic of low status (Philippians 4:12). Those who have gentle spirits show love to one another, are not boastful and do not challenge each other (Galatians 5:23, 26). They

are not bold toward one another but rather bear one another's burdens, especially those who are caught in trespasses (Galatians **6:1**). They are patient, showing forbearance to one another in love (Ephesians 4:2).

A gentle Christian must respect those who ask him or her to give reasons for the hope he or she has (I Peter **3:15**). He or she must not have **bitterness**, envy, or selfish ambition (James 1:21), but must manifest his or her good life and deeds. Meek Christians will not look down upon or argue with people. They will not **return** arguments to the ones who blame them (Numbers 12:3) but will always rejoice in the Lord (Isaiah 29:19) and enjoy great peace (Psalms **37:11**).

Third, meekness can be understood in relation to culture. Gentleness and humility can be expressed in various forms. In the Hebrew context, one may bow one's head like a reed or spread out sackcloth and ashes as a bed (Isaiah 58:5), which implies repentance from sins (Isaiah 58:5). Humility may also mean asking for help from one's neighbors persistently (Proverbs 6:3). It can also be expressed through patience, kindness and self control (Galatians 5:22-23), showing forbearance for one another in love (Ephesians 4:2), taking a low position (James **1:9**), and not speaking against one another (James **4:11**). It is the quality of life often expressed through soft and gentle words (Job 41:3), gentle answers (Proverbs 15:1), and a **soft** tongue (Proverbs **25:15**).

Fourth, meekness is not only a quality of heart but can refer to humble circumstances (James **1:9**). In such circumstances, God promises to provide

grace to Christians (I Peter 5:5; James 4:6). In doing so, God is able to lift them up to a high position. A meek Christian must be willing to live under such circumstances, because he/she is under the rule of God and his control (I Peter 5:6).

It was in this state of mind that Paul sought to win his **converts'** obedience to Christ (II Corinthians 12:12) although many Christians in Corinth were eager for Paul to be more assertive in his dealings with the church. They would have welcomed a heavier hand and applauded more aggressive behavior. Here their perspective seems to be shaped by their culture. In Corinth, perhaps more than anywhere else, people were eager to embrace those who projected themselves with vigor and force. Paul not only rejected this perspective but turned it on its head. He conformed to the meekness and gentleness of Christ and in this way sought to build up his converts.

Fifth, meekness is **concerned** with blessing. God promised to bless the meek with salvation (Psalms 149:4), high position (Luke **1:52**), and inheritance (Matthew 5:5). Believers who possess this quality can see the results of their verbal communication in various ways: **(1)** they are able to make their knowledge more acceptable (Proverbs **15:2**), **(2)** they are able to help the hearers understand and accept the content of the message, **(3)** they are able to make the people feel good, and **(4)** they can even cause great results through their communication (Proverbs 25:15).

An Investigation and Interpretation of **Biblical** Concepts of Christian Witness

According to Local Language and Culture

A number of words are used in the Thai Bible for **"gentleness,"** **"meekness,"** and **"humility."** **These** Thai words are from Sap Sam Pan (Nishimoto 1987). The book was written by Robert **Nishimoto**, an American scholar. These words are usually derived from a combination of two sets of words. The first set contains eight shades of gentleness and meekness which are not explicitly or clearly seen in the Hebrew, Greek, or English Bible. They are: **(1)** politeness, (2) softness, (3) quietness, (4) sweetness, (5) lowliness, (6) bowing down, (7) lightness, and (8) smoothness. The second set is **concerned with** various parts of the physical body or its actions which the writers of the Bible and the Thai translators wanted to use. They are: **(1)** tongues, (2) words, (3) voice, (4) heart, (5) answer, and (6) self.

There are approximately fifty Thai words for meekness, gentleness and humility in the Thai Bible. **Twenty-four** words are derived from the combinations of **"heart"** or **"self"** with the eight shades of the first set. This means the Thai consider meekness as generated from the inner being and expressed outwardly and culturally through tongues, words, voice, and answer.

For example, in \ Peter 3:8 the word "gentle" in Thai is "meek heart and polite **heart,**" while in Matthew 11:29 the word "humble" in Thai is **"soft heart and bowing down heart."** Gentleness and meekness in Thai usually describe the inner being by using the word **"heart"** and "self" expressed

through the physical body and its **activities**. This movement of the words coupled **with** the parts of the body will show politeness, softness, **lightness**, sweetness, and smoothness and will be visible in the minds of communicators. For the Thai, religion is felt, not **intellectualized**.

The summary of the characteristic elements of meekness is used as a guide to construct or design a meekness **pattern** to contribute to effective evangelization. The summary of characteristic elements of meekness is carefully designed from Scripture passages where the biblical terms "**meekness**" and "humility" are used. Table 4 shows a summary of characteristic elements found in the meekness approach to witnessing. These elements of meekness are demonstrated in behavior and required for missionaries and Thai Christians who witness among the Buddhists in Thailand.

Table 4

Summary of Characteristic Elements Found in a Meekness Approach to  
Witnessing

Source	Elements of " <b>meekness</b> " demonstrated in behaviors
1. Holy Bible: Passages	<p><u>Scriptural Elements</u></p> <p>-Christians should be meek and gentle in correcting people (II Timothy 2:25)</p>

where  Biblical terms  are used	<p>-Christians should <b>bring</b> rest, not burden (Matthew <b>11:29</b>)</p> <p>-<b>Christians</b> should endure suffering with patience, with tears and with trial (Acts <b>20:19</b>)</p> <p>-Christians should be willing to be under someone (I Peter 5:6)</p> <p>-Christians should be able to live in humble circumstances (James <b>1:9</b>)</p> <p>-Christians should conform to the meekness and gentleness of Christ in building others up even though they might apply some of their cultural habits to us (II Corinthians 12: <b>9-12</b>)</p> <p>-Christians should ask for help from their neighbors persistently (Proverbs 6:3)</p> <p>-Christians should not speak against one another (James <b>4:11</b>) but should express themselves through gentle answers and not harsh words (Proverbs <b>15:1</b>)</p> <p>-Christians should be patient, showing forbearance to non-Christians in love (Ephesians 4:2), kindness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)</p> <p>-Christians should respect those who ask them to give reasons for the hope they have</p>
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<p>2. Dictionaries:</p> <p>English and Thai terms and usage</p>	<p>(I Peter 3:15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Christians will not <b>return</b> any arguments to those who accuse them (Numbers 12:3)</li><li>-Christians should produce gentle, soft, mild, submissive and compassionate attitudes (I Peter 5:5; 3:8)</li><li>-Christians should show gentle behavior towards non-Christians, especially to those who are ignorant and make mistakes (Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 5:22; Ephesians 4:2)</li><li>-Christians should not be boastful and should not challenge one another (Galatians 5:23, 26)</li><li>-Christians should be gentle among all people (II Timothy 2:24)</li><li>-Christians should reduce self-sufficiency, power, independence (Webster 1957:1213), be tamely submissive, mild and moderate in action (Webster 1957:1528)</li></ul>
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### The Meek Approach Requires Humble Attitudes Toward Buddhism

This section contains: **(1)** what does a humble attitude toward Buddhism look like? (2) why do we need it in Christian witness in Thailand? and (3) how does it work in the process of Christian witness?

A humble attitude toward Buddhism is the attitude of American missionaries and Thai Christians that: **(1)** does not look down on or blame Buddhism, (2) does not think or say that Buddhism comes from evil or Satan, (3) does not compare religions, (4) does not abuse Buddhism as the first step to extolling Christianity, (5) does not make any negative judgments on what they see outwardly, and (6) does not see Buddhism as a stumbling block to the gospel, but rather as a stepping stone in Christian witness.

A humble attitude toward Buddhism means that missionaries and Thai Christians should: **(1)respect** Buddhism and Buddhist faith, (2) mention positive things and good things in Buddhism and admire some of the teachings of Buddha, (3) study Buddhism seriously and find its authenticity, (4) know that God loved Buddha and God agreed with some of the teachings of Buddha, (5) realize that the truth in Buddhism is **God's** truth, since all truth is God's truth, and (6) realize that God loves all human beings because God created them all in **God's** image, and human religions reflect God's prevenient grace.

Why do missionaries and Thai Christians need humble attitudes toward Buddhism? Humble attitudes lead missionaries and Thai Christians

to study Buddhism **seriously** and dialogue with Buddhists to **learn** sincerely about the individual faith of Buddhists. This helps missionaries and Thai Christians to be **learners**, not judges. It opens hearts and minds of missionaries and Thai Christians to **learn** and embrace Buddhism more naturally. These attitudes are needed in cross-cultural communication because they help missionaries and Thai Christians to shape their narrow and aggressive minds to be absorptive ones. Absorptive attitudes are able to embrace and digest all kinds of teachings of Buddha and categorize them according to which are correct and which ones are wrong. These attitudes create resilience in the minds of gospel communicators to have more capacity in absorbing negative attitudes and expressions of some Buddhists, to listen to their wrong ideas in their belief systems, to empathize with their stubbornness in their own faith, and to have patience, kindness, and understanding, in searching for more understanding from them.

These attitudes help those who have carefully studied Buddhism and confronted its error more selectively and powerfully than the ones who fulminate against everything traditional without studying any of it. These attitudes help missionaries and Thai Christians to develop a genuine, sincere, and **longterm** relationship with Buddhist friends and lead missionaries and Thai Christians to understand a number of cultural elements and behavior of Buddhists in their society.

How do humble attitudes toward Buddhism work in the process of culturally appropriate Christian witness? These attitudes serve as a

foundation where communication relationships can be planted, watered, and cultivated (Dodd 1995:15). It helps missionaries and Thai Christians to assume the burden for making an attempt as their first step in improving their intercultural communication skills. It helps to prevent intercultural breakdowns in communication. These attitudes lessen and combat ambiguities and uncertainties in the communication process. They encourage missionaries and Thai Christians to create precontact impression formation smoothly (Dodd 1995:21). This creates an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit can convict us, and then through us he convicts hearers (Bavinck 1960:272). It leads missionaries and Thai Christians to open their minds, their hearts, and their lives to Buddhists; this leads the receptors of the gospel to become involved in an intimate dialogue (Zahniser 1994:72). It also prevents missionaries and Christians from violating cultural values and the identity of the Thai (Komin 1991:132-218). It prevents missionaries and Christians from their misuse of words and deeds against Buddhism.

This meek attitude prevents missionaries and Thai Christians from involvement in unworthy witness or **proselytism**. It generates Christian witness that does not divorce evangelism from apologetics, as the apostles never did, and does not surrender to the current understanding of pluralism as an ideology that affirms the independent validity of every religion (Stott 1995:54), but rather it helps missionaries and Christians to demonstrate the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ. This occurs only when missionaries and Christians can sit down and dialogue with Buddhists and understand

their faith in a deep way so that we begin to see the circuit through which the gospel current will flow.

This attitude, as I see it, helps **missionaries** and Christians escape from the “**unworthiness**” involved in a proselytizing witness and may challenge our motives (**concern** for our glory, instead of Christ's), our own methods (trust in psychological pressure or in material inducement, instead of the Holy Spirit), or our message (focused on the alleged falsehood and failures of others, instead of on the truth and perfection of Jesus Christ) (Stott 1995:54).

#### The Meek Approach Requires a New Attitude Toward Thai Culture

What is a new attitude toward Thai culture? **All** nine-value clusters suggested by Komin and eight domains of cultural values suggested by Fieg in Chapter 2 provide cultural circuits where Thai people commune with each other. Differences in cultural and religious values help missionaries and Thai Christians be aware of communication signs in cross-cultural communication.

Since Thai culture values “**ego**” and “**face**,” missionaries and Christians should not apply techniques that include straightforward, negative performance feed back, strong criticism, and **face-to-face** confrontation with the Thai. A challenge should be avoided. **Western** cultures are good about face to face confrontation. Missionaries and Thai Christians should not look down on or violate the ego of the Thai and their dignity. Monarchy,

Buddhism, and the nation should not be touched unless one has knowledge about them.

They should not develop a teaching attitude toward the elderly. A loud voice and argument should not apply in Christian witness. American people usually have a louder voice than the Thai. A religious discussion should be soft and smooth. Preaching of the gospel at the pulpit with a loud voice or shouting the word of God, especially when elderly people are in church is interpreted as rude. For Buddhists, *Dharma* should not be shouted by religious leaders.

*"Klab"* and *"Ka"* should be put at the end of each sentence in dialoguing or in Christian witness with Buddhists. The word *"Glap Rean"* (I humbly present this to you) can be used from time to time at the beginning of a discussion when discussing with: (1) elderly people, (2) officials who are older than missionaries and Christians, and (3) those who have higher roles and status in Thai society. The term enables a more polite and smooth discussion. This word demonstrates a hierarchical value. It shows respect and humility to older people. New converts should not respect and listen to missionaries and to church leaders more than their families. This pitfall should be avoided by all means.

Missionaries and Thai Christians who are flexible, situation-oriented, and those who love fun and *sanuke* can also relate to the Thai and lead them to Christ efficiently (Fieg 1989:58). Using Thai words correctly helps missionaries and Thai Christians realize where missionaries and Thai

Christians are in the social system. Those who cannot use Thai words correctly and properly are looked down on by the Thai and are not qualified to share religious matters. Respecting social solidarity is important. Ethnocentrism of missionaries should be discarded. Judgment on Thai culture should be suspended.

A new attitude toward Thai culture suggests that missionaries and Thai Christians should be humble, gentle, friendly, hospitable, generous, and have a sense of humor. If missionaries and Thai Christians study Thai culture seriously, it will provide knowledge in details of **"how"** missionaries and Thai Christians can express these qualities in Thai culture in sophisticated ways. For example, generosity in Thai culture means that missionaries and Thai Christians are able to share their houses, food, and lives with the Thai. If they do, their relationships with the Thai are greatly improved.

Missionaries and Thai Christians should be able to display their love, kindness, sincerity, commitment, humility, and mercy through their lifestyles. The Thai require certain qualities in the lives of gospel communicators in order to relate to them well. Developing listening ears and adapting to Thai culture are required for developing a bonding relationship with the Thai.

Missionaries and Thai Christians should witness smoothly and softly to the Thai. They should have a quality of **Pranee-Pranorn** (compromise with a smooth relationship), **Ru-Jai** (know the heart), and **Mee Nam Jai** (have a gracious heart) to the Thai. These are key elements in Christian witness.

Right manners applied by missionaries and Thai Christians at the right time and in the right place should be known and are required by missionaries and Thai Christians to reduce opposition and melt down a number of barriers erected by Buddhists. Missionaries and some Thai Christians are able to know these behaviors by developing a close relationship with the Thai.

Why do missionaries and Thai Christians need a new attitude toward Thai culture? Electricity flows along electrical circuits where electrical resistance is low. It will not **flow** along a higher resistance. A new attitude toward Thai culture helps missionaries and Thai Christians see a number of low resistance circuits of **cross-cultural** communication where the things of **God**, (e.g., the content of the gospel, expression of Christian unique unity, love, fellowship, joy, verbalism and **nonverbalism**) will be communicable meaningfully to the Thai.

A piece of wood can be cut easier along the grains of the wood than to cut it **cross-sectionally**. A durian can be peeled easily along its natural grains. Missionaries and Thai Christians will see more fruit in Christian witness if they allow the message of Christ's love to flow with the grain of Thai culture.

Missionaries should love and be proud of Thai culture. Their real appreciation can only come from a serious study of the history of the Thai. Thai people have always used meekness to solve crises and various aggressive problems in their country. Missionaries should realize that parts

of the elements of the meekness of Christ have always been embedded in Thai culture. This is God's **prevenient** grace.

How does a new attitude toward Thai culture work in the process of Christian witness? Good attitudes toward Buddhism and Thai culture help Christians avoid harshness when talking about religion (Feltus 1936:135). These attitudes also help Christians develop the approach of meekness by opening their lives to the Thai and trusting the convincing work of the Holy Spirit (Zahniser 1994:71-78). They are able to relate to others as neighbors and **equals**, regarding others' beliefs as worthy of serious consideration (Bavinck 1960:247-272). This attitude will keep them relying on the faithfulness of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, and not on pressure placed upon people (Bavinck 1960:247-272). Direct confrontation of all kinds can be avoided by the help of this kind of attitude (Fieg 1989:76; LCWE 1980:10). This attitude will help missionaries avoid criticism (Komin 1991:135) and will develop a *Krengjai* (consideration for others) quality in them. Comparing religions **verbally** can be eliminated by this kind of attitude (LCWE 1980:6). Violation of **"ego"** self or anybody close to self cannot occur if missionaries and Thai Christians embrace this attitude (Komin 1991:133). Thus missionaries will begin to have a sympathetic understanding of the Buddhists in a real way (LCWE 1980:10). By having this attitude, missionaries and Thai Christians may be able to show their sensitivity to the cultural concepts of those to whom they go and their credibility among the people they are reaching (LCWE 1980:10). With this attitude, cross-cultural

communication can occur in a pleasant atmosphere, and good words from Christians will remain easily in the minds of the Thai.

The Meek Approach Requires a **Long-Term, Genuine,** and Sincere  
Relationship with Buddhists with No Strings **Attached**

A long-term, genuine, and sincere relationship with Buddhists with no strings attached means that missionaries and Thai Christians should develop a bonding relationship along the webs of social networks by using appropriate roles and status in Thai society. This kind of relationship does not allow missionaries and Christians to simply use it as a means to fulfill the task of missionaries and Christians in their Christian witness. It is a relationship that has no hidden agenda. It is a relationship for the relationship's sake. This bridge of genuine relationship will not collapse, though receptors of the gospel may reject Christ at first. Missionaries and Thai Christians should continue to build these bridges to connect Buddhists and Christians together as individuals or as communities.

Why do missionaries and Christians need to build this kind of relationship? The **research** in Chapter 2 helped me to **learn** that the interdependence orientation of the Thai reflects the spirit of community collaboration, the value of co-existence, and interdependence. A bonding relationship can be increased if missionaries and Thai churches cooperate in a community or help social networks of a new convert or seeker. Missionaries who are able to show their active involvement in helping the Thai in the time of crisis or need when a family is ill, suffers a death, or has a

wedding, bind their relationship through reciprocal services such as assistance and exchanges of food and thus are greatly used in Thailand.

Our examination of the category achievement task orientation revealed that a good relationship, not **task**, wins all. Missionaries and Thai Christians who are **worked-oriented**, aggressive in witnessing, and who consciously evaluate their success by the number of saved **souls** may be frustrated and discouraged constantly. Good relationship, not task, wins all.

The data from the interview results indicated that all three groups agree to use relationships as the first step in the Christian witness. Missionaries and Buddhists differ in this idea. Missionaries see that relationship serves as a means to fulfill the end, but Buddhists ask for a genuine relationship with no hidden agenda. It must be sincere and long term. It should not be used to do something.

Buddhists would like to see a manifestation of ethical elements from **Christians'** lives such as the fruit of the Spirit, sympathy, sacrificial living, humility, sincerity, unconditional love, mercy, peace of God, and **politeness**.

Relationship must be smooth, consistent, and natural. "**Jai Yen** (cool heart)," "**Ta Norm Nam Jai** (**hold** the heart of others with **care**)" concepts are required. Explanation of the gospel can be done through Thais' understandings of Buddhist faith, at first. Biblical concepts should be built on the concepts that already exist. When these are perceived firmly by Buddhists, then more biblical elements can be added to shape and correct **Buddhists'** inadequate concepts.

This requirement is quite difficult for some missionaries because **Western** missionaries who have grown up with **work-oriented** mindsets have more difficulty extending this kind of relationship to the Thai. Their concept of time does not allow them to **"waste"** it. They have to fulfill the requirement of their task. Christian witness is the work that needs to be done. They want to accomplish their work which the church sent them to do. They think they have to preach the gospel to as many as possible and also measure the efficiency of their missions. They came to Thailand to win souls, and they have to win them **now**. They say, "the task is great, but the hour is late." By holding this theology, they tend to make mission a burden rather than a **joy**, to make it part of the law rather than part of the gospel (Newbigin 1989:116).

Can Thai Christians and American missionaries build a genuine, sincere, and long-term relationship with Thai Buddhists with no strings attached? Can they do that without showing explicitly their aim and **eagerness** to convert them? Surely the supreme desire of all Christians is to see people come to Christ. There is no doubt about that, but can we allow the Holy Spirit to do his job? In the present situation, when a Buddhist becomes a Christian, he or she will lose quite a number of friends. Why? The **Christian's eagerness** to witness to them displeases the Buddhists. I wonder how the Thai churches can grow with this mentality. Maturing Christians should **learn** or sense how to maintain their relationships with Buddhist friends. The habit of getting the witnessing job done quenches the genuine relationship and does not promote the intimate relationship

required by Buddhists. A meek approach requires a change from this mentality to a healthier one. Any missionaries who are willing to do it humbly and with understanding will grasp the reasons behind my new approach.

How does this kind of relationship work in Christian witness? A long-term, genuine, and sincere relationship is not a relationship just to accomplish the task of Christian witness which missionaries and Christians intend to do, but a relationship that allows missionaries and Christians to enter Buddhists' lives, to observe and to absorb their hurt, pain, **problems**, and crisis, and at the same time allow them to observe and absorb Christ and his goodness in Christian lives in a natural way. This relationship serves as a bridge to connect missionaries' lives and the lives of Thai Christians with **Buddhists'** lives so that Christ will walk out of believers' lives and enter the hearts of Buddhists in his own time.

With this meek attitude in their minds, missionaries and Christians are able to maintain good relationships for a long period of time (Komin 1991:200). This attitude is helpful in extending a friendly relationship with families in the community over a period of time (LCWE 1980:13). When a crisis comes to a person in a community, he or she will seek help from the missionaries and Christians more than anybody else. The whole community will be appreciative of the Christians and missionaries. If a member of a community **turns** to Christ, the community may be able to understand the

situation much better. With this attitude in mind Christians may seek to serve humbly and lovingly for a long period of time (LCWE 1980:10).

This relationship opens a number of channels for missionaries and Thai Christians as follows: (1) to look beyond surface condition of cultural differences to locate cultural circuits of **cross-cultural** communication, (2) to develop a curiosity about the **internal** elements of culture, such as cultural structure, cultural thought **pattern** and logic, and cultural relationships, and (3) to discover ways that relationship affects content and content affects relationship (Dodd 1995:28-29).

The Meek Approach Requires a Presentation of the Gospel which Brings  
Benefits and Help. Not **Challenge** and Threat

A presentation of the gospel which brings benefits and help, not challenge and threat means that missionaries and Christians: (1) Should not communicate the gospel that results in breaking of relationships. The gospel truth shared by missionaries and Christians should build up and strengthen relationships. (2) Should not start with saying that Buddhists will go to hell if they do not believe in Christ today. (3) Should not look down upon all idol worshippers as evil doers. (4) Should not make Buddhists lose face, and (5) Should not lead Buddhists to be interested in something that they do not have any background to understand.

Missionaries and Thai Christians should present the gospel to Buddhists at first in such a way that they see and understand concretely how the gospel is able to bring to a sense of well being, happiness, and a sense

of meaning of life. There are a number of elements of gospel truth that Buddhists are able to perceive right away. Missionaries and Christians should demonstrate the power of the gospel in terms of care and concern for Buddhists as individuals or as communities, particularly when they are facing problems and **crises**. Christ should be presented to them as, "The Man for **others**," and the one who is able to release the suffering of Buddhists (*Pad Pao Khaum Took*). After that we may present the theological side of the gospel and explain to them the cause of their suffering, and the cure of the suffering. Buddhists need the forgiveness of sin through Christ's death on the cross. They must come to the point where they repent from their sins. It should be noted that **misionaries** and Thai Christians should mention the cost of **discipleship** to them as well.

Why do we have to present the gospel as providing benefit and help to Buddhists? The research of Hughes (1989) suggested that there are very few people who responded to the gospel because of its message of salvation as the forgiveness of sin. For the Thai Christian students, forgiveness of sin was seventh out of ten reasons for the importance of religion. On the contrary, missionaries who responded to the same question mentioned that forgiveness of sin was the primary reason for the importance of religion.

Missionaries and Thai Christians should be sympathetic to the Thai and should demonstrate Christian witness as help and benefit, not challenge and threat, because Buddhists are interested in **this-worldly**

benefits. The gospel should demonstrate its power, care, and **concern to** touch **Buddhists'** affective domains first. Buddhists are not interested in the concept of God, hell, heaven, resurrection, and forgiveness of sin. They do not have those concepts in their minds. If they have such a concept, it seems to be different from the Bible and too removed from their **experience** for them to understand. These areas are important to Christians, but not to Buddhists. When missionaries and Christians bring benefits and help to Buddhists, a grateful relationship starts developing in **Buddhists'** hearts. This helps Buddhists listen to the gospel from those missionaries and Christians.

How does this element of the meek approach work in Christian witness? This approach operates on the same level of Christ's incarnational ministry. The second Person of the Trinity came down to be born as the baby Jesus and later on brought benefits and help to men and women. These benefits and help served as signs pointing to something higher than those benefits and help, that is to Jesus Christ. Missionaries and Thai Christians should present the gospel to Buddhists on a level that enables them to comprehend Christ's power, goodness, and ethical lifestyles which heal and solve their daily problems. After that missionaries and Thai Christians should lead Buddhists one step further to the person of Jesus Christ and his real purpose in coming to earth.

This kind of presentation of the gospel creates grateful relationship (Komin 1991:139-143), smooth interpersonal relationship (Komin

1991:144), and a religio-psychical orientation (Komin 1991:171-186). This method decreases ambiguities and uncertainties (Dodd 1995:15). It helps Buddhists to open their minds and hearts and leads them to intimate dialogues which can be used by the Holy Spirit to convince people of the goodness of Christ (Zahniser 1994:72).

The gospel of Jesus Christ always has two sides: (1) the work of Christ on the cross, and (2) the life and the resurrection of Christ and his teachings. The life of Christ has two sides: (1) the human-ward side which shows ethical elements, and (2) the Godward side which shows miracles and power over Satan and sin. The starting point in conveying the gospel to Buddhists according to our interview results is **with** Christ's teachings and the ethical side or human side. The meaning of the church today is to be Christ visible in the world (Laschenski 1984:76). Buddhists are interested in hearing the teachings of Jesus. His teachings which they can think of and apply to their daily lives are appreciated among Buddhists. Presenting Jesus Christ as a man for others can be communicated to them in a deep way. When they hear these things, they get benefits and help in their spiritual lives. Therefore Christians have to commend themselves, and thereby the gospel, not as threats or challenges but mainly as help and benefits. Thus we should build personal friendships and seek to serve humbly and lovingly (LCWE 1980:10).

Christians may ask Buddhists to follow Jesus' teachings for a period of time. Sooner or later they find out by themselves that they are not able to

achieve Jesus' ideal. At this point, Christians can introduce Christ's **power--** the power of the Holy Spirit. Challenging them openly and in explicit ways like **Western** evangelists and some pastors may not always bring good results. However, the power of God's words and the Holy Spirit can transcend their perceptions and **worldview**. The Thai are able to think quietly by themselves and decide to come to a conclusion by their own methods about the truth of the gospel. This kind of approach and challenge is deeper and more genuine because the power of the Holy Spirit is able to encounter the Thai in their worldview.

Social responsibility can be accomplished at the same time with the Christian witness or even prior to evangelism. But when Christians and missionaries perform this kind of ministry, as Srinawak (1968) **warned**, failure may occur even out of good intentions.

#### The Meek Approach Requires a Time for Diffusion of the Gospel

This meek approach simply means that missionaries and Thai Christians should not seek magical formulas in condensing the contents of the gospel into a capsule or as brief as possible in order to share with them in less time. **The "Four Spiritual Laws"** can be used more effectively in the **Western** world than in the **Eastern** world. In the **Western** world or secular industrial world, efficiency may be measured by greater production in less **time**. in religion, however, this may not be the case. Time as appointed and designed by human beings from other cultures should not be a leading factor in Christian witness in Thailand. Missionaries and Thai Christians

should not participate in what many missionaries called **"hit and run" evangelism**. But missionaries and Thai Christians should: **(1) *Jai'en*** (cool heart) and allow longer time to build up their relationship with Buddhists because a genuine, **long-term**, and sincere relationship requires a longer time to build, **(2)** allow themselves to become cultural **insiders**, **(3)** demonstrate Christlikeness, **(4)** live among them so that they know **Buddhists'** needs, and **(5)** spend time in dialoguing and laying down biblical foundations for them so that Buddhists can understand thoroughly what the gospel means.

Why do missionaries and Christians need a longer time for diffusion of the gospel? And how does this element of the meek approach work in the process of Christian witness? Religious values of Thai Buddhists require time for gospel values to take root in their minds. They have different concepts of God, love, sin, and salvation. The meek elements discussed in sections 3 through 7 require time to develop. Generally speaking, it is not enough to share the contents of the gospel within 15 minutes by using a booklet called The Four Spiritual **Laws**" to the Thai or within 40 minutes as Evangelism Explosion III suggested. Both methods are good to some Thais who have background about Christianity, but not enough for the Thai who hear the gospel for the first time in terms of their solid understanding of the **gospel**. It is fine if missionaries and Thai Christians use them in the process of Christian witness. I am not saying the Holy Spirit and God's words are not operative in the hearts of the Thai when those two methods are used. But

what I want to say is that we need greater clarity and cultural appropriateness in presenting the gospel. The gospel itself does not change in its essence. Always and everywhere it concerns the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as both history and achievement, together with the offer of a new life in the Spirit and a summons to people to repent and believe. Yet our presentation of the gospel is often culturally inappropriate, intellectually confusing, and spiritually stale (Stott 1995:54). The differences in theological and experiential concepts between Thais and Americans suggested by Seamands (1981) and Hughes (1989) require a longer time.

This idea will help missionaries and Christians not force the Thai to make a quick decision (LCWE **1980:1**). *Kreng Jai* quality (consideration for others) needs to apply in the process of Christian witnessing. An aggressive personality or pushy attitude should not be used with the Thai (Komin **1991:146**). Direct confrontation, a head-on approach, or hit and run methods should not be used with Buddhists (Fieg **1989:76**). Missionaries and Thai Christians should develop a relationship with social networks and seek to relate to others as neighbors and equals (Bavinck **1960:247-272**). They should rely on the faithfulness of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than on pressuring people (Bavinck **1960:247-272**).

### The Meek Approach Requires Indigenous Strategies for **Cross-Cultural**

#### Communication of the Gosol

Indigenous strategies for cross cultural communication of the gospel mean that missionaries and Thai Christians should know: (1) how Buddhists

use meaningful indigenous media to convey their **ideas**, (2) how missionaries and **Thai** Christians can improve their credibility as gospel communicators, (3) how missionaries and Thai Christians can be family-focused in their Christian witness, (4) how to demonstrate God's care and **concern** through social **concern**, and (5) how to find suitable roles and status for missionaries and Thai Christians to develop genuine relationships with Buddhists in the Thai society.

Why do missionaries and Thai Christians need these strategies for cross-cultural communication of the gospel?

The library research, the interview data of the answers to questions C3, **C4**, and E, and the historical research suggest that indigenous strategies of Christian witness and use of meaningful indigenous media need to be considered for a meek approach. Credibility of the communicator and of the church are vital for effective **cross-cultural** communication of the gospel. The library research by Fieg (**1980** and 1989), the interview results of answers to questions C3 and E6 suggested this fact. The historical research of how Nang Buo Lai and Luang Petch Songkram witnessed to their social-networks as appeared in Chapter 3, the library research from LCWE (1980), and the interview research answer to questions A and E6 in Chapter 5 suggested that family focused evangelism is one of the keys in Christian witness in Thailand. The historical research from the case studies of Caswell, House, and Bradley, and the interview results to the incident 6, 7, and 8 confirm that social **concern** should not be neglected. The interview

**research**, historical research, and the library research suggested that missionaries should seriously consider the role and status they occupy while working in **Thailand**. In other words, missionaries and Christians should live and present the gospel along the grain of Thai culture if they expect to see good results.

How do these strategies work in the process of Christian witness? These strategies seek to find a smooth way or indigenous lines of cross-cultural communication for missionaries and Thai Christians to bring the true meanings of the gospel to Buddhists by utilizing cultural and religious values to optimum efficiency. It intends to decrease a number of degrees of foreignness to the meanings of the gospel. These strategies help Buddhists to listen to the message of Christ and make the message **flow** along the line of communication with which local people are familiar. Five elements of the meek approach and five indigenous strategies in this section total **10** elements in the meek approach as suggested in this dissertation for a new approach of Christian witness for the Thai people (see Figure 2 [page 156] and Figure 3 [page **216**]).

The library research suggested that indigenous strategies are able to overcome a number of hindrances to effective communication. The solution demands an action to establish a cycle in the communication process. Communication is not portrayed by a straight line. It is not a verbal echo or a rebound of actual words. It is more like a cycle. The more that interchange and feedback to clarify meanings occur, the more likely biblical

understanding will occur (LCWE 1980:8). Indigenous strategies can be found if: (1) missionaries and Thai Christians are serious in studying Thai culture and Buddhism, and (2) missionaries allow and also encourage Thai Christians to come up with their own ways of Christian witnessing.

The research findings in Chapter 2 provide data from Thai culture. **Religio-psychical** orientation provides a clue that the Thai generally have serious doubts about the truth and validity of **"other-worldly"** doctrines or notions such as **God**, heaven, and hell. The Thai hold more of a **"this-worldly"** orientation. Theological and apologetic approaches may relate only to those who practice a high religion form of Buddhism. Missionaries therefore need to use a new strategy to fit their folk level worldview by explaining how the goodness of Christ can help them in their suffering **now**. Applying an intuitive or feeling approach, seeing Christ as the "Man for others" (**Koyama** 1968:16) and the one who can deliver them from all fears, may be considered a new way of meekness in Christian witnessing.

Education and competence orientation gives a clue that knowledge for its own sake is not highly valued by the Thai in general. Gospel knowledge for its own sake is not interesting to the Thai. For them, being Christian is perceived as a chance for a better life. If this is so, Buddhists might be interested in being Christians. The knowledge of the gospel must relate to spiritual **benefit**. if being Christian brings persecution and rejection, there **will** be resistance to conversion. A new approach of meekness will lead missionaries to contact wider groups in societies such as families of

seekers. This approach can create group movements and decrease friction in cross-cultural communication between new converts and their families.

The Christian witness must be non-assertive, polite, humble, and express the gospel through good appearance and manners in an interpersonal approach. All of these must be accompanied with a smile and by pleasant, relaxed, and friendly interaction.

The smooth interpersonal relationship orientation characteristic of Thais and discussed in Chapter 2 provides clues to the meek approach. Missionaries and Christians should not focus on **self-actualization**, ambition, achievement, and manifest destiny when in dialogue with Buddhists. The Thai place priority on a group of **"other-directed"** social interaction values, designed to project a picture of smooth, kind, pleasant, interaction **with** no interpersonal conflict. Missionaries who are caring and considerate, responsive to situations and opportunities, calm and cautious, polite and humble can be used greatly in Thailand.

The interview research can only lead to the conclusion that Buddhists love to see Christlikeness in Christians. In answer to the question C3, Buddhists suggested that the ethical teachings of Jesus can serve as contact points. Missionaries and Thai Christians suggested that **"Like Payap"** is one of the best illustration for an indigenous strategy. Buddhists mentioned in C4 that missionaries and Christians should play a role in the society. In this way they will come to know the context in a deep way. Buddhists prefer to see Christians' lifestyles more than their words, posters, or tracts at first. This

does not mean that we will not present the message of the gospel at all. The context requires witness through lifestyle first, and words next. **Christians** should care how Buddhists understand the message. Contact points should be found. Similarities between Buddhism and Christianity should be applied to pass on the gospel message. Do not sell Christianity as people sell insurance. Do not present the gospel without regard to how well Buddhists understand it. Buddhists suggest that a natural encounter is preferable to a designed encounter.

From this point on, I will discuss indigenous strategies for cross cultural communication of the gospel as already mentioned earlier in this chapter. They are **concerned** with five elements: (1) using meaningful indigenous media, (2) establish credibility of the communicator and the church, (3) develop family focused evangelism, (4) demonstrate social **concern**, and (5) find suitable role and status.

#### 1. Use Meaningful Indigenous Media

The library research suggested that in Thai culture, **oral** communication tends to predominate while printed media have low impact. Thai culture has its own primary communication systems, such as indigenous song, dance, drama, music, story telling, illustrations, and other arts. The best media for each culture should be used in evangelization. Use and adaptation of local media should be encouraged in all evangelism. Indigenous illustrations, key historical illustrations, parables, symbols, and analogies are encouraged for use in Christian witness (LCWE 1980:9). In

urban areas and some rural ones too, **Western** forms of media such as film and songs have been used **indigenously**. Christian communicators should carefully study the principles and process of indigenisation behind the acceptance of such media and not follow **Western** modes (LCWE 1980:9).

From the interview results, those who know Like Payap--Thai traditional **opera--agree** that it can be used in **evangelism**.

Presently, Miss Unchalee **Jongcadeekit**, a well known and popular singer has been conducting many concerts in local churches and public places to draw young people to Christ by her indigenous songs composed by Thai Christian song writers.

Muang Thai **Church**, an indigenous church in Bangkok, Thailand used Thai drama successfully for years to convey Christ's love to the Thai. On February 14, 1993 which was St. Valentine's day, the church demonstrated the power of Thai drama to show Christ's love to men and women. After the drama, Christians and Buddhists cried because they were impressed by the meaning of the stories. Sometimes, drama can convey the feeling to the audience better than preaching.

## 2. Establish Credibility of the Communicator and the Church

The library research suggested one main factor which is important to Christian **witness--credibility** of Christians. Fieg suggested that in a hierarchical culture, higher status carries more credibility than lower status. For example, in Thailand, the king has the highest credibility and workers are the lowest (Fieg **1989:16**). In all relationships, there were distinct

**superior** and subordinate **roles**. Authority and power have been considered natural to the human condition. Authority and power derive from moral and ethical excellence of those who lived by it (Fieg 1989:16).

The historical research revealed that when the head of the family become a Christian, he was able to lead the whole family to Christ because he had the highest credibility in the family. Luag Petch Songkram and Nang Buo Lai are good examples discussed in Chapter 3.

The interview research mentioned in answering question C3 that Buddhists have to accept gospel communicators prior to accepting their teaching. The response to question E6 mentioned that new converts faced more difficulty in sharing the gospel to their parents.

The credibility of the communicator is vital to the **audience's** acceptance of his message as credible. Missionaries and Thai Christians should be able to develop their credibility among Buddhists. A sympathetic understanding of the Buddhists is needed. A Christian approach should always be with humility and living persuasion, backed by the testimony of dynamic personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A living demonstration of the gospel is required (LCWE 1980:10).

The credibility of the church as a whole is a crucial issue in the effective communication of the gospel. Through the eyes of the Buddhists in Thailand, the Christian church is an alien import and this becomes an obstacle to the gospel communicators. The Thai church should attempt to establish culturally relevant forms and expressions **for** the church. Thai

churches should allow the local context to determine its own forms and expressions in the Christian witness and in the life of the church (LCWE 1980:10).

### 3. Develop **Family-Focused Evangelism**

Evangelism of whole families rather than evangelism of individuals is vital. The historical research seemed to suggest that the ministry of Luang Petch Songkram and Nang **Buo** Lai were fruitful because both of them won their new converts from their own families.

In the interview results, the response to question A demonstrated that social networks in Thailand served as a main factor to prevent people to come to **Christ**. Missionaries and Thai Christians must target their Christian witness by winning the whole family. The relationship should be developed with the whole family, not only one single member in the family.

Individual conversion loses its impact in Thai society and encounters various opposition forces. The individual should be encouraged to prepare to win the whole family. Developing a relationship with members of the family and community should be done naturally in the early stage of the Christian witness.

### 4. Demonstrate Social **Concern**

Buddhists see Jesus Christ as a man who does good things. Jesus Christ is the man who lived for others in the eyes of Buddhists. He healed the sick, helped the poor, did good, and showed compassion to the oppressed. A careful study of the gospels reveals that evangelism and

social action are two facets of the Christian faith (Seamands 1988:66). The Thai church should demonstrate social **concern** and welfare with evangelistic activity spontaneously, with no strings attached. The outreach must be carried out in a needy community naturally.

The historical research proves that missionaries of the past era worked more effectively when they performed both ministries of evangelism and social **concern** at the same time. Caswell, House, Bradley were the best example in this matter.

The interview results which derived from the response of incident 6, 7, and 8 confirmed that social **concern** was the prime factor in Christian witness among Buddhists.

Today great care must be taken not to spoil new inquirers or produce "rice Christians" with dependent attitudes.

##### 5. Find a Suitable Role and Status for Missionaries and Thai Christians

Historical research demonstrates that successful and influential missionaries were those who put themselves in an appropriate Thai **role** and status. Interview results also indicate that Buddhists are not familiar with the role of missionary. Since missionaries do not have roles inside the Thai social structure, the Thai do not know how to relate to them. They are not quite sure how to use personal pronouns for missionaries and for Thai ministers. Thais wonder, "**Are** they medical doctors, or teachers, or priests, or Peace Corps **Volunteers?**" In a hierarchical system, people should know roles and status of the other people in order to communicate with each other

well. Jesse **Caswell**, Constantine Phaulkon, and Dr. George McFarland are good examples of powerful and successful missionaries in Thai history. All of them had their roles in Thai society.

The present method used by missionaries and Thai Christians is to develop a relationship with the Buddhists and find an opportunity to share the gospel. Generally speaking, Christians use one way communication. The new approach suggests a two-way communication--a dialogue approach. Christians should learn from Buddhists of their needs, ideals, and knowledge in Buddhism. Through a dialogue approach, both parties gain knowledge of the others. A dialogue approach produces no argument. The communication process flows smoothly without interruption. Aggression and barriers do not develop in communication. Christians are able to converse with Buddhists in all matters as the Holy Spirit guides. A designed encounter **turns** into a natural encounter. People are free to discuss subjects about which they know little. Both parties enjoy conversing. By this **method**, Christians come to know various aspects of **Buddhists'** lives and needs.

Buddhists have their own needs and religious **ideals**. These may be material needs, social needs, or religious ideals. Christians should show interest and **concern** for those needs. Acceptance and encouragement for Buddhists to fulfill their ideals and needs should be recognized. Theravada Buddhism basically teaches the ability of self to reach religious **ideals--to** be good and follow the five precepts of Buddha. Through a genuine

**relationship**, if **Christians** are able to show repeatedly and in a concrete way to Buddhists that their ability to reach their ideals can be fulfilled through the Holy Spirit who lives in Christians, then through this approach Buddhists will begin to realize the power of the gospel on their own. Christian lifestyles which demonstrate the goodness of Christ to Buddhists are the most important element for the meek approach. If their desires and needs can be fulfilled by help in a biblical way and by the power of prayer of Christians, then Buddhists will come to their own conclusion that Christ is the Lord. When Buddhists encounter crises, Christians' prayer and genuine help done in the Spirit of Christ by the whole body of the Christian community can confirm to them that God's love and presence are in their midst.

Many missionaries and Thai Christians unwittingly believe that communication is what is said rather than what is heard. We focus on a clear presentation of the gospel, but our main **concern** should really be, how clear was the reception? (LCWE 1980:8). The **frustration** of the gospel **proclaimer** revolves around the fact that he cannot transfer meaning. The Christian may speak the message, but the Buddhist produces the meaning in his own mind. Therefore the communicator can only transfer "**bits**" of information. Listening is therefore a vital part of the effective communication process, especially as Buddhist concepts are based on presuppositions and premises diametrically opposed to the gospel (LCWE 1980:8). Missionaries who do not seriously consider this matter will fail to win many converts. They

may develop severe feelings of frustration, guilt, and failure. Most **missionaries** said that they feel frustrated in their **ministries** in **Thailand**.

### Summary

In this chapter, I attempt to design a meek approach for the **Christian** witness in Thailand. The data I used in this chapter derived from the **information** in Chapters 2-5.

The meek approach can be observed in various areas of cross-cultural communication and the Christian witness. The new approach aims to follow the biblical meekness. It suggests that missionaries and Thai Christians adjust their attitudes toward Buddhism and Thai culture. This can be done by serious study of Buddhism and Thai culture, which, in turn, may lead them to appreciate both. Factors related to the new approach are **concerned** with developing a genuine and sincere relationship, indigenous strategies and media in presenting the gospel, credibility of both the church and gospel communicators, social **concern**, and family-focused evangelism. The efficiency of the new approach depends on how one can utilize each factor to optimum efficiency. All factors should be applied at the same time, if possible, in Christian witness in Thailand.

I have based my findings in this chapter on the research of scholars discussed in Chapter 2, historical research laid out in Chapter 3, and the interview results recorded in Chapters 4 and 5. The new approach of Christian witness consists of: **(1)** humble attitudes toward Buddhism, **(2)** requiring a proper attitude toward Thai culture, **(3)** developing a long-term,

genuine, and sincere relationship with Buddhists with no strings attached, (4) presenting the gospel bringing benefits and helps not challenges and threats, (5) allowing time for diffusion of the gospel. **Indigenous** strategies for **cross-cultural** communication of the gospel must be **concerned** with: (6) using meaningful indigenous **media**, (7) establishing the credibility of the communicator and the church, (8) developing family-focused evangelism, (9) demonstrating social **concern**, and (10) finding a suitable role and status of missionaries and Thai Christians.

## CHAPTER 7

### With Christ on the Road to Thai Meekness

Chapter 7 suggests how to apply the meek approach presented in Chapter 6 in real life situations for Thai Christians and missionaries in Thailand. The chapter consists of four sections.

First, there is a brief summary of six principles or key elements of the meek approach in Christian witness derived from the library research, historical research, and the interview results discussed in Chapter 6.

Second, there are examples from real life situations of missionaries who demonstrated some principles or elements of the meek approach in the past as well as in the present and who have been successful in their Christian witness. Questions will also be asked in order to analyze their **ministries**. Some suggestions will be made for missionaries to remove hindrances to the meek approach and take risks for inclusive small steps toward the same goal in Christian witness.

Third, there are examples from real life situations of Thai Christians who demonstrated some elements of the meek approach in the past as well as in the present and who have been successful in their Christian witness. Then questions will be asked in order to analyze each case as to why each was so successful in Christian witness. After that I will recommend that Thai Christians remove hindrance factors and take risks to pursue the meek approach as their life goal in their Christian witness.

Fourth, at the end of the chapter, I will suggest Christ's way of **meekness** in Christian **witness**. If Jesus were a Thai, I believe he would demonstrate his meekness in Christian witness to Buddhists in the ways I suggest to Thai Christians and missionaries.

I intend to apply these six principles or key elements of the meek approach outlined in Chapter 6 by conducting seminars for Thai Christian leaders and some missionaries in Thailand. In the near future, these leaders and missionaries will, in **turn**, train 128,000 Thai Christians and **1,000** missionaries in Thailand who are presently affiliated under three main organizations. These Christians and missionaries are presently affiliated with: **(1)** the Church of Christ in Thailand (**C.C.T.**), **(2)** the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (E.F.T.), and **(3)** the **Southern** Baptist Mission (S.B. M.) (Barrett 1982:664).

I intend to help these two **groups--Thai** Christians and **missionaries--** work toward a common goal and use strengths of their background as resources to pursue the meek approach. As a researcher, I am aware of the needs of missionaries and Thai Christians who are convinced by the evidence in this research and sincerely want to know how to apply this meek approach in actual witnessing. It is not my purpose that I should tell missionaries what they ought to do in their Christian witness in Thailand. I have written for those who sincerely ask me to share my insights as an insider to help missionaries and Thai Christians apply this method in their actual witnessing.

This chapter also suggests **various** inclusive applications by which missionaries and Thai Christians can take at least **small** steps from their present mindsets, their denominational **policies**, and their ministries toward the common **goal--the** meek approach in Christian witness. Missionaries cannot replace their Western thinking with **Eastern** mindsets entirely; however, they can make an effort to minimize **Western** thinking by training their consciousness toward the six principles of the meek approach.

#### Key Elements of the Meek Approach in Christian Witness

Six principles or key elements of the meek approach described in Chapter 6 are: humble attitudes toward Buddhism, new attitudes toward Thai culture, genuine, sincere, long-term relationships with no strings attached, longer time for diffusion of the gospel, presentation of the gospel as bringing benefits and help not challenges and threats, and using indigenous **forms** or **patterns** for cross-cultural communication of the gospel. It can be seen that these six principles or key elements of the meek approach can be divided into non-verbal and verbal elements which are both important to Christian witness.

First, missionaries must not violate the identity of the Thai. They must not demonstrate by their words or deeds that they misuse the name of the nation, Buddhism, and the king. Comparing, blaming, or being sarcastic about Buddhism is prohibited. On the contrary, the meek approach suggests that missionaries and Thai Christians should have a humble attitude toward Buddhism. They should talk about the holiness of Christ. Interview results

suggested that most missionaries and Thai Christians believe that Buddhism is derived from Satan and is a stumbling block for propagating the gospel. That is why they do not study Buddhism thoroughly. They must find good things in Buddhism to be used as stepping stones, not stumbling blocks in Christian witness. Caswell, the Houses, and the Mattoons did not demonstrate negative attitudes toward Buddhism. Their ministries brought good results.

Second, missionaries should have a positive attitude toward Thai culture. They should study it seriously in order to contextualize the gospel within the **culture**. The Thai require certain qualities in missionaries in order to relate to them well. Missionaries should be humble, gentle, friendly, *sanuke*, hospitable, generous, and have a sense of humor. Missionaries should be able to display their love, kindness, sincerity, commitment, humility, and mercy through their lifestyles. They should develop and adjust their lifestyle to bond themselves to insiders. They should develop listening ears to hear and to feel the needs of the Thai. *Pranee Pranorm* (compromise with a smooth relationship), *Ru Jai* (know the hearts of the Thai), and *Mee Nam Jai* (have a gracious heart) are the most important qualities of missionaries and Thai Christians. The historical research and the interview results showed that missionaries are weak in this area. They used their own culture rather than Thai culture to express the biblical meanings of the gospel in their Christian witness.

Third, missionaries should develop a genuine, sincere, long-term relationship with Buddhists and their social networks with no strings attached. Developing relationships with Buddhists helps Christians to know about their identity. A parental or sibling relationship is needed. This relationship, if it is genuine, **turns** missionaries from outsiders to insiders. This status, in **turn**, helps missionaries to understand **the core** of Buddhism and Thai culture. Missionaries who are **work-oriented** can misuse or misunderstand the purpose of building the relationship in the Thai context. This relationship reflects the Thai cultural value of grateful and smooth relationship and helps people to live and respond to each other accordingly. Missionaries must not see it as a tool to win souls or manipulate the Thai by using material means.

The relationship **will** grow as long as missionaries do not show their **ethnocentrism**, but humble themselves in serving the Thai according to their needs. A large block of time is needed to fulfill this requirement. Incarnational ministry will be helpful. As insiders, missionaries are able to guide, correct, or even encounter the Thai in an efficient way. Missionaries and Thai Christians should have roles and status in Thai culture because their credibility derives from that. **Caswell's** relationship with King Mongkut had a great effect on the **King's** life. The relationship of the Houses and the Mattoons with Nai Na and Nang Esther caused both of them to know Christ. Luang Petch Songkram and Nang Buo Lai, working along their social networks, saw numerous converts.

**Fourth, Christians** should be sympathetic to the Thai and should demonstrate **Christian** witness through help and benefits, not challenge and threat. Buddhists are interested in **this-worldly** benefits. The gospel must first demonstrate its power to the Thai in this area. Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. House, and Mrs. Mattoon spent two years teaching **English** to a group of ladies in the king's palace before they were able to tell them about Christ. The Thai women **learned** that Christian faith would bring them happiness in life, and then forgiveness of sin. Bradley used his aptitude in medicine to help many Thais, and then he used these opportunities to share with them about Christ. The early mission of the Roman Catholic priests brought benefits and helps to Siam and the king. Their goodness drew the king closer to them. Tirabutana, a Thai student discussed in Chapter 3, studied English with missionaries because a missionary's wife helped her and brought her benefits.

Fifth, the meek approach requires a long time for the gospel to be diffused in the lives of the Thai. The interview research shows that the Thai spent twice as much time as Americans in seeking Christ. A good relationship and a long term Bible study with the Thai, along with contextual explanation of the gospel through dialogue, may create a biblical view of life which coincides with the biblical way of life in the lives of the receptors of the gospel. The research suggests that missionaries should not be forceful or bold in their Christian witness, but trust the Holy Spirit to work forcefully in Buddhists' hearts. The historical research suggests that Christians should

not set their targets on leading only one Buddhist to Christ, but they should try to win the whole family. House and Mattoon accepted Nai Na and Nang Esther into their lives as son and daughter. Caswell spent three years with King Mongkut, thereby making a life long impact. The early Roman Catholic missions spent long years demonstrating their help to Siam in various matters.

Sixth, missionaries and Thai Christians should play appropriate **roles** in Thai culture if they are to develop their relationship with the Thai and become insiders. Their credibility is based upon this area. The search shows that missionaries and Thai Christians have suffered in **contextualizing** the gospel. Lack of studying Thai culture and developing deep relationships with the Thai hinders them from seeing the grain of the culture. Indigenous strategies in Christian witness are required. The gospel should be demonstrated through indigenous media such as drama, stories, and parables.

Within the social networks, Caswell served as a teacher while Bradley served as a doctor. The **missionary's** wife who taught Tirabutana served as a teacher. Phaulkon was an official of the Siam **government**. They were very effective in communicating or relating to the Thai because Thai culture is hierarchical. Missionaries must know proper manners, words and deeds to really become insiders on each level of society.

Examples of Thai Christians Who Demonstrated Some Principles of the  
Meek Approach in their Christian Witness

This section is to show missiological applications of the meek approach in Christian witness in concrete situations. There are seven examples of missionaries and Thai Christians who demonstrated some elements or principles of the meek approach and were successful in their Christian witness: **(1)** Christian witness of some missionaries to Ubolwan Hachawanich in New Zealand, **(2)** Christian witness demonstrated by an American student to Nantachai **Mejudhon**, **(3)** Christian witness of Ubolwan Hachawanich demonstrated to Nantachai **Mejudhon**, **(4)** Christian witness of Nantachai **Mejudhon** demonstrated to **Luengluck Krutangka**, **(5)** Christian witness of Nantachai **Mejudhon** demonstrated to Wallop **Kangwankeitchai**, **(6)** Christian witness of the Rev. Boonsri **Klinhom** demonstrated to the **Northern** Thai Buddhists, and **(7)** Christian witness demonstrated by James Gustafson to the Thai.

1. Christian Witness of Some Missionaries to Ubolwan Hachawanich in  
New Zealand

Ubolwan **Mejudhon**, a lecturer at Prince of Songkla University, Bangkok, Thailand, was sent to study at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, in **1971**. She was a Buddhist who had lost both her father and her older brother when she was in her teens. One of her classmates in New Zealand was John Hong, a Korean Christian from Seoul, Korea. Hong

cared for and was concerned for his classmates. Hong laughed and talked a lot while many **international** students **experienced** homesickness. His lifestyle challenged Ubolwan and her friends. Hong developed a friendship with Ubolwan and dialogued with her about religion. His role as classmate helped Ubolwan to share her ideas with him. He did not criticize Buddhism explicitly at the very beginning stage of his conversation. Hong spent seven months in caring and helping Ubolwan and her friends by using Bible verses to fit their needs. He led Ubolwan to meet many good Christians in New Zealand. He also prayed for her seriously and gave her good books to read such as Who Moved the **Stone** and Peace with God. Ubolwan accepted the precious fellowship and warm welcome from many Christians at Elizabeth Street Chapel, Wellington, New Zealand. Hong asked Ubolwan for a Buddhist Bible to read, and he gave her the Holy Bible in exchange. Hong waited for the **Holy** Spirit to work in **Ubolwan's** heart. The dialogue had gone smoothly and continuously for seven months. Hong shared frankly with Ubolwan about his life prior to coming to Christ.

The night Ubolwan decided to accept Christ as her Lord and Savior was the night that she and Hong were invited to have dinner at the house of a retired New Zealand missionary to India, Gordon Junck. He was around 70 years **old**. Junck did not witness about Christ but rather took the role of servant by cooking Indian food. Junck cared for Ubolwan in many areas of her life by asking her many questions **concerning** her education, her loneliness while staying in New Zealand, her boy friend, Nantachai who was

studying in the States, and her family back home in Thailand. At the end of her visit, Ubolwan said **good-bye** to him and thanked him for his **concern** and kindness at the door of his home that night. He embraced her like his own daughter and whispered into her ear, "**Buddha** was a good man, my daughter, but Jesus is **God**." The Holy Spirit touched her mightily that night and she said to herself she would make the decision to be a Christian.

Hong did his best in his Christian witness, but he came to the point where he did not know what to do. God guided Hong to bring Ubolwan to Junck. Junck's credibility was admirable. His age made him like a father to Ubolwan. He had been a missionary to India for many years. He knew Indian culture and language. That night when he cooked an Indian dish for Hong and Ubolwan, she felt as if Junck knew many things about her culture. Indian food and language are not far from Thai food and language. This made her feel at home.

Junck took the role of father by cooking the Indian dish *Kao Mook Kai* (spicy rice with chicken). He did not witness to Ubolwan about Christ, but asked her about her study, her welfare while in New Zealand, her job and her family in Thailand. Junck knew Buddhism and Indian culture well. His words demonstrated his positive attitudes toward Buddhism. His sayings and his touch were used by God to impress upon Ubolwan about his **concern** for her spiritual needs. Ubolwan was convicted by the Holy Spirit that night of her need for Christ. Ubolwan seemed to sense through her own cultural perception that this old man loved her and cared for her physical

welfare and her emotional and spiritual needs in a real way. Hong's lifestyles was used by God to an extent, but Junck's meekness led Ubolwan to Christ's feet that night. Both were used of God in unique ways. Junck and Hong should not be seen as **competitors**, but rather cooperators in God's Kingdom.

It is evident that the ministry of Hong in the early stage of his witnessing worked positively toward the meek approach because he was able to apply the teachings of Jesus to fit the needs of Ubolwan and her friends. The credibility of the church was commendable. Hong developed a **long-term**, genuine, sincere, friendship with Ubolwan. He did not criticize Buddhism. This made Ubolwan move toward Christ. Hong's role reminded Ubolwan of the goodness of her own older brother.

Junck's role may be equated **with** that of Ubolwan's father. Junck knew Indian culture and Buddhism. He served well and cared for Ubolwan well. He was used by the Holy Spirit by applying his personal touch and an unforgettable statement to lead Ubolwan to Christ.

## 2. Christian Witness Demonstrated by an American Student to Nantachai

I want to share another side of the meek approach which I experienced during **1971-1972** at **Cal Poly**, San Luis Obispo, California. Ubolwan began sharing her interest in Christianity with me after Hong approached her. Her acceptance of Christ, caused me to seek him, too. At the very beginning stage of my seeking for the Lord, I went to study the **Bible** with Christian students on the campus. The leader of the small group was a

**Christian** student. About eight or nine students attended every Tuesday night. I was the only one who was not a Christian, but only a seeker after **Christ**. One night, I went early to the meeting. The meeting usually started at 7 p.m. I waited until **7:15** p.m., but I saw that only one or two students came that night. Then I heard a man crawling at the front door of the apartment where the meeting took place. When the door opened, I found the leader of the small group. He was drunk. He made a loud noise. I **returned** home that night and told myself that I would decide not to become a Christian, for I felt that, as a Buddhist, I was better than that Christian leader. I talked to myself that a good Buddhist, a good Muslim, and a good Hindu is better than a bad Christian.

On Wednesday **morning**, I happened to meet the leader of the small group again in the library. He seemed to be well and knew what had happened the night before. He approached me and said, "**Nantachai**, I am really sorry for last night. I know that I was a stumbling block to many. Please forgive me, **Nantachai**." I thought to myself that this religion was strange in that he dared to approach the one he had sinned against and ask for forgiveness. I was very impressed by that man. He seemed to repent in a real way. His confession brought me to seek Christ again. My negative feeling, unforgiving spirit, and judgmental attitudes which caused me to **think** that I was a better person than he disappeared. What was left in me was my wonder about the sincerity of this man who followed Christ and admitted that he was sinful and asked forgiveness from a Buddhist like me.

It should be noted that the meek approach, in my experience, is to approach the person to whom we do something wrong and ask for forgiveness. And at the same time, we **turn** our face to God and confess our sins to him. The meek element in this case is to show our own weakness, follow the teachings of **Jesus**, and present ourselves and wait for the mercy of the other people. This vulnerable spirit can be used by God to **turn** the minds and hearts of other people to Christ.

I thought to myself, This Christian student lives as a sinner like me. In one way he is different from me; he dares to accept his sin and confesses to me, but as a good Buddhist, I would not dare to do **that**." He did not try to be a spiritual giant although he was a small group leader. He showed his own weakness and opened himself to God and to me. His vulnerability and sincerity were used by God to convict me of my sin as well. I felt that the **Holy Spirit** convicted my heart strongly that day. I began to seek the Lord again, and this time even stronger. It seems to me that **if Thai** Christians demonstrate their Christian witness by confessing their sins to the ones whom they did something wrong, this biblical acts can be used by God to convict Buddhists of their sins. It should be noted here that biblical behaviors (e.g., confess sins to each others) which are opposite to Thai culture (**e.g.**, Thai people do not confess sins to each others easily) can be used by the Holy Spirit to convict the Thai in a mighty way.

### 3. Christian Witness of Ubolwan Hachawanich Demonstrated to Nantachai Mejudhon

Ubolwan was a Buddhist scholar who began teaching at a university in Bangkok in **1968**. I used to be a Buddhist monk but resigned from the monkhood to teach engineering subjects in the same university with Ubolwan. Both Ubolwan and I got scholarships to study abroad in 1970. Before we parted from each other at Bangkok **International** Airport, we promised to get married immediately upon our **return** to Thailand in **1972**.

When Ubolwan met Hong and discussed many things with Hong about Christianity, Ubolwan began sharing with me and asked for my advice about how to answer some difficult questions of Hong about Buddhism. She took time for seven months to move herself to Christ slowly through the meekness of Hong. She did not keep her searching secret, but shared openly with me. This helped me not to feel threatened by her.

It should be noted that our relationship, which had developed for more than three years, held us together. She first asked me what I thought about Christianity. I shared with her naturally that Christianity was a good religion. Through dialogues, we **learned** a number of similarities and differences in Buddhism and Christianity. At first, she started with a number of similar elements between the two religions. She did not say that Buddhism was evil or came from Satan, but she simply shared with me that she had found Christ. The argument was very warm, for I appreciate the teachings of Jesus greatly. But the common ground which hooked me with

her was the ethical systems of Buddhism and Christianity. I mentioned that all religions were good. Ubolwan agreed. I said that five precepts of Buddha were the same as the last part of the Ten Commandments. Ubolwan seemed not to argue with me at all. Some of the teachings of Buddha in the *Dhammapadam* (the book that contains the teachings of Buddha) such as: "The fault of others is easily perceived but that of one's self is difficult to perceive," were the same as the Sermon on the Mount. Ubolwan did not argue with me in this matter. I told Ubolwan about Buddha's teachings such as: "Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." Ubolwan agreed with that.

Ubolwan did not explicitly show me the exact line of her departure from Buddhism to Christianity. Ubolwan committed her life to Christ definitely, but she did not tell me straightforwardly. Her many hundreds of letters helped me to think that she trusted and loved Jesus and wanted me to know Jesus, too. After she found Christ, Ubolwan did not listen to a number of western Christians who warned her not to marry me because I was a Buddhist at that time. She listened to God in prayer and kept her relationship with me. She came to stand with me on the same level and assured me that God confirmed that he had a wonderful time for us. She did not leave me alone, but walked together with me to Christ.

Ubolwan tried to help me to understand the importance of becoming a Christian. She was wise in eliminating all factors that might cause me to

misunderstand her in becoming a **Christian**. She encouraged me to seek the truth and never threatened to break her promise of marrying me when I returned to Thailand.

Ubolwan let me be myself in seeking Christ. Spiritually speaking, she left me in God's hand. Humanly speaking, she stood by me and encouraged me to seek Christ. This attitude of not interfering with God's plan for me allowed God to prepare a unique conversion experience for me in God's time. Her unstructured or unplanned Christian witness allowed Christ to demonstrate his own sovereignty to me and to lead me to himself in his own time.

Ubolwan's Christian witness helped me see my need for accepting Christ. We dialogued for months, and my knowledge about Christ increased. I moved toward Christ when Ubolwan shared the similarities of the two religions and showed me what benefits I should get if I made a decision to accept Christ. This process took time.

We dialogued through more than 600 letters (**1,280** pages altogether) during seven months of my searching for Christ. Those letters contain discussions about concepts of God, sin, salvation, resurrection, redemption, and how a Buddhist can come to Christ. It seemed to me that I came closer to Christ and developed positive attitudes toward Christianity and Christians. I was encouraged by Ubolwan to read the Old and the New Testaments. I finished reading the Bible within seven months. She suggested that I should go to church, which I did. She did everything possible to lead me to the

point where she knew that she could not lead me further. She felt that she could not step over into the divine realm. She realized that the most important step of my life was between God and me. She realized her boundary. She handed my hand to **Christ** and trusted God's sovereignty completely by spending time in prayer. She left me there and told me that she believed that God would deal with me by himself and he might have his own way for me to experience him.

While she was waiting for God to work in my heart, she wrote a sweet letter promising me that she would not marry any other person. But one thing she asked was that **I** would seek Christ and **find** him. She did not force me any **longer**, but allowed a longer time for me to search for Christ by suggesting books and introducing good churches for me to attend in San Luis Obispo, **California**. She did not argue with me in her letters but encouraged me to seek **Christ**. **I** could accept Christianity more and more. My searching for Christ started with similarities between the ethical system of both religions and moved toward some things that were different between them. It was fascinating for me to see that the five precepts of Buddha were the same as the last part of the Ten Commandments. Many teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are the same as the teachings in the *Dhammapada* (the book that contains the teachings of Buddha). The more **I** sought Jesus' ethical teachings in the New Testament, the more **I learned** about his lifestyle. **I** was very impressed with Jesus' life. Some of his teachings

appealed personally to me. My searching for God shifted from the similarities of the ethical systems to the life of Christ.

Ubolwan **turned** to God in prayer. She had prayed **earnestly** for my soul. She prayed from 2 a.m. in the **morning** until 6 a.m. every day. She would walk alone around the huge pond of Prince of **Songkla** University in **Hadyai**, Thailand and sit by the pond and **pray** for me. She asked missionaries and members at Hadyai **Baptist** Church in Hadyai where she attended every Sunday to pray for me. Rev. and Mrs. Dan R. Cobb who were **Southern** Baptist missionaries joined her in prayers. The members of Elizabeth Street Chapel seriously remembered me and prayed for me. The Korean Christians at Joy Mission, a Christian Youth Organization which consisted of 500 members, and where John Hong ministered, prayed for me. God said in the Scriptures that God shall **beautify** the meek with salvation. That is true. **In** San Luis Obispo, **I** felt that **I** wanted to seek the Lord seriously. May **1,1972**, at 10 p.m., **I** happened to open the Scriptures again to **I** Corinthians **13:1-13**. **I** read and **I** cried. **I** asked God to give me this **love**, and **I** surrendered myself totally to him.

**I learned** from my case study that the meek approach implies that we have to leave the case with God. We should not fight or argue with Buddhists. Our love for the lost souls, our sincere prayers and our yielding each case to God are the ingredients in the meek approach which Ubolwan demonstrated. This method worked positively in my case.

Why was Ubolwan so successful in her **Christian** witness in my case?

I learn from Ubolwan's **Christian** witness that the factors drawing me closer to Christ were: (1) our **long-term**, genuine, and sincere relationship served as a bridge to link me to her, (2) her presentation of the gospel as benefits and help by promising me that she would marry me, drew me closer to Christ, (3) her good attitudes toward Buddhism by dialoguing with similarities of the two religions helped me to search for the life of Christ and led me to see many different elements between the two religions, (4) Ubolwan allowed a longer time for me to search for Christ, but when she pushed me to make a decision at her own pace, I struggled, (5) many Christians yielded my case to God and prayed for me sincerely, and (6) her vulnerability and her trust in the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated her faith.

The Christian witness of Ubolwan demonstrated some of the meek elements that appeared in Chapter 6. Her strategy moved positively toward the meek approach as well as negatively against the meek approach. When she applied the meek principles with me, I moved toward Christ, but when she decided to demonstrate the opposite of the meek approach, I moved far away from him.

#### 4. Christian Witness of Nantachai Mejudhon Demonstrated to Miss Luengluck Krutangka

When I returned to Thailand in 1972, I began teaching at Kasetsart University, Bangkok. There I began to share my personal experience with

Christ to my own university students during **1973-1977**. Miss Luengluck Krutangka was one among them. Miss Krutangka studied in the department of Farm Mechanics, **Kasetsart** University, Bangkok, **Thailand**. My students in the university knew I was a Christian because I shared my testimony and talked to them about God casually at the end of each class. Many of them wanted to know why I became a Christian. Krutangka thought that I was crazy for many years. To my surprise, one day she knocked on the door of my office with tears in her eyes. She **said**, Teacher, I would like to be a **Christian**." I asked why. What she explained as her reason reflected the meek approach in Christian witness.

She observed my lifestyle for four years and heard all I said about Christ, who could change a life. I did not help my students to understand the gospel because I did not contextualize the gospel. I did not use an indigenous presentation of the gospel. But she knew that I cared for students and treated each one of them, as well as workers in the department, with special care and love. But one day she saw me enter the lecture room with a lot of mud on my shirt. All the students were surprised. I told my students that a truck splashed mud on me ten minutes before while I was walking on the road to the campus. I could not go back home to change my clothes. In fact, I did worry about dirt on my shirt. Krutangka said that she observed the peace, calmness, and joy on my face. I did not show my anger at the truck driver. She said that she went home and wondered why I responded to the situation with joy. She began to make a number of

experiments by praying to God whom I had mentioned to her for years. "God answered me every time I prayed," she said. These experiments overwhelmed her. She kept these experiments in secret for months. God demonstrated to Krutangka according to her culture requests and ways of making deals with God. She said to me that God answered her prayers seven times. God brought benefits and help to her family which caused her to realize God's love. That day I explained to her the meaning of the gospel, and she decided by herself to accept Christ and yielded herself to Christ.

I had never spoken against Buddhism during those years while I had been teaching. I allowed my students to seek Christ at their own pace. I demonstrated through my life and shared the good news frankly. My role as a teacher permitted me to do so and helped me to build my relationships with my students naturally. But I analyzed that my life spoke louder than my words. I could be seen as an outsider by my students because of my Christian faith which I held. My relationship with my students made me an insider automatically. My credibility as an instructor had helped me positively to deal with students throughout four years. I always brought to them benefits and help by teaching them many subjects as well as helping them with their physical needs. I had never challenged them or threatened them, but trusted in God's power and sovereignty in leading my students to God.

I have always asked myself why Knjtangka decided to become a Christian. I learned that my demonstration of meekness in Christian witness

worked positively toward the meek **approach**. There are a number of principles of the meek approach which I applied to Krutangka unconsciously and using an unplanned strategy. They are: (1) my **role** and status helped me to develop a natural relationship with my students, (2) my credibility as an **instructor** at the university was very high, which caused the students to trust me as an insider, (3) I had never even once **criticized** Buddhism, (4) I allowed time for Krutangka to think and rethink for four years without pushing her to receive Christ, (4) my relationship to students was genuine, with no strings attached, (5) the presentation of the gospel, though not indigenized to fit them, was made with many helps and benefits to many students. These principles actively worked in **Krutangka's** life for years and worked positively toward the meek approach.

5. Christian Witness of Nantachai **Meiudhon** Demonstrated to Mr. Wallop Kangwankeitchai and Mr. **Padermchai**

Mr. Wallop Kangwankeitchai and Mr. Padermchai were my students at King **Mongkut's** Institute of Technology, Thailand. As a special lecturer, I went to teach there three times a week for a year. I had also graduated from this institute in 1968. My seniority and my role as a teacher caused me to be more than an insider among students. My role and status was *Roon Pee* (a senior brother). I taught with relaxation and sometimes informality, and at the end of each class my students would ask me to stop teaching and tell them about Christ. During each recess, two students came to discuss Christ with me and followed me to church. The credibility of Christians at the

church and myself as their teacher made them listen to me. It took them a year and a half to become Christians. They quietly observed Christian lives and made experiments on their own about Christ. They read the Bible by themselves. All negative factors which cut cross the grain of Thai culture disappeared. The only factor was a time factor and the power of the Holy Spirit which had been working in these students caused them to come to know Christ.

They asked me why they were sinners. They said to me that they did many good things. I explained to them the best I could what sin was all about. It seemed to me that the conviction of sin did not occur in them because I explained to them about the biblical concept of sin. I did not mean that my explanation did nothing for them, but it did not bring conviction of the Holy Spirit. I told them that if they really wanted to know about whether they were sinful in the sight of God, God would reveal truth to those who sought him. They ran to the church seven days later on one Saturday evening with excited faces. They told me that God had revealed many sins to them.

When I began to **analyze** the reason why these three students came to accept Christ, I found that I did not have any hidden agendas in my mind in Christian witness. I did not have any methods or plans to convert them. I did not intend to convert them and did not have any designed plan or strategies to pin them down for Christ. I just was myself and loved them dearly. I wanted them to get the best in the academic world and in their personal lives. I unconsciously demonstrated my Christian life to them. I did

not talk about Buddhism or compare religions. I took a correct role in Christian ~~witness~~--a teacher. I allowed one year with constant care and **concern** without expecting any **return** from my students. I opened my life, home, time, and my money for them without thinking of getting anything in return. I embraced them into my life and prayed for each one of them fervently. The Holy Spirit visited each one of them. At that time I did not know how to contextualize the gospel, but my Christian witness was a Thai way. These three cases represent 70-80 people who came to know Christ with the meek approach in the early stage of my ministry in those universities where I taught.

6. Christian Witness of the Rev. Boonsri **Klinhoom** Demonstrated to the **Northern Thai**

When I interviewed Christian pastors in the North in November 1996, I came across a pastor named Rev. Boonsri Klinhoom of **Kelang Pantakit** Church, **Lampang** Province. The church is affiliated with the Church of Christ in Thailand. Klinhoom holds ecumenical beliefs and his ministry is very evangelical. He loves witnessing and planting churches. His church is an indigenous church he started a decade ago. He had good attitudes toward Buddhism and he has never mentioned to Buddhists that Buddhism is from Satan or that Buddha would be in **hell**. Klinhoom dealt with Buddhists gently, and his church brought benefits and help to the whole community in that area. He mentioned that many Buddhists came to him and asked him to lay hands on their heads for blessings of God on their

birthdays. By his meek approach, he is able to conduct Bible study in many homes, and many Buddhists have joined the Bible study. His Bible study in each home has been conducted for years. He develops his relationship with Buddhists for a long period of time in a number of cell groups in many homes. **Klinhoom** has never pushed people to Christ but waits for the Holy Spirit to work in **Buddhists'** hearts. His credibility among the Buddhist community is high. He is a **learned** man. He loves to study and open his heart to learn how to win the Thai to Christ. Klinhoom does not use indigenous presentations of the gospel. When he presented the gospel, he did not compromise. He used Evangelism Explosion III in his church. His ministry has been very consistent. His membership moved from zero, when he started the church a decade ago, to almost 200 members. His church is indigenous.

Why was Klinhoom so successful in his ministries? **I learned** that he applied some of the principles of the meek approach consistently. Klinhoom demonstrates the meek approach in the following areas: **(1)** he develops his relationship with Buddhists in home cells and allows Buddhists in those cells to participate for a long period of time, **(2)** he spreads the gospel through families by using home cells, **(3)** his ecumenical training allows him to have good attitudes toward Buddhism, and many Buddhist neighbors whom **I** visited admired him, **(4)** his credibility and that of the church are admirable among the Buddhists nearby, **(5)** his roots are in **Northern** Thailand, so he knows the culture in that area well.

Taking the above data into consideration, I learned that Klinhoom worked positively toward the meek approach. His presentation of the gospel is not **concerned** with indigenous ways, but pure **Western** ways with very high consistency. I believe that if he can make the gospel easily understood by the Thai by using indigenous ways of the **Northern** style, his church will become even more fruitful. **Klinhoom's** ministry confirms that **if** we apply some elements of the meek approach, but not all of them, the results of our ministries would be changed greatly.

Conclusion of Christian Witness Among the Thai. The illustrations above occurred at different times and places. Nantachai was converted in the United States in 1972. Knjtangka and **Kangwankeitchai** came to know Christ in Bangkok in 1977. Klinhoom grew his indigenous church among the **Northern** Thais in **Lampang** province during **1987-1997**. It is 600 kilometers from Bangkok. But I **learned** that the meek principles applied by gospel communicators unconsciously produced the same **fruits--genuine** conversion to Christ.

For this reason, I would like to suggest that readers take risks by introducing these meek principles in their Christian witness as much as possible. From the data above, presenting the gospel in **Western** ways with much prayers and equipping Christian witness with these elements of meekness **turned** out to be successful. I **learned** that the power of the gospel can be demonstrated upon the **Thais'** lives by the Holy Spirit. Those who criticized Buddhism and spent less time presenting the gospel without

relationships with the receptors hardly saw fruits in their ministries.

**Christians** who lead Buddhists to Christ without letting them have a clear understanding of the gospel and experiencing being born again by the Holy Spirit, spend much of their time and energy following them up for years . At the end of the **follow-up** process, those new Christians may drop out and may bring **discouragement** to those witnessing to them.

Relationship, longer time, good attitudes toward Buddhism, credibility of the communicators of the gospel as insiders seemed to play the most important roles when Thai Christians witnessed to Thai Buddhists. Cultural factors were not mentioned in the above illustration because both communicators and receptors of the gospel are Thais, and Klinhoom used the meekness approach unconsciously. They did not expose themselves much to missionaries. In the next section, readers can see more clearly the cultural elements when missionaries witness to the Thai.

#### 7. Christian Witness Demonstrated by James Gustafson to the Thai

One of the best missionaries in demonstrating the meek approach in Christian witness in Thailand is James Gustafson, an American missionary affiliated with the Covenant Church in the United States. Gustafson received his **M.A.** from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1970 and presently is working for his **Ph.D.** in the United States.

His thesis entitled "**Syncretistic** Rural Thai **Buddhism**," was published in **1970**. Gustafson seemed to be aware of the problem of Christian witness in Thailand. He wrote:

The basic rationalization for the failure of Protestant missions in Thailand to win many converts to **Christianity** is that the Thai are Buddhists and, therefore, basically resistant to the gospel. In response to this accepted **"fact,"** missionaries in Thailand have approached the missionary task from two perspectives: (1) on **the** one hand, there are those who have accepted little or no growth as normal and have, therefore, switched emphasis from conversion to dialogue and social service; (2) on the other hand, there are those who have been so intent on bringing about the conversion of the Thai that they have not stopped to ask whether they are pushing for conversion to Christ or to **western** Christianity. (Gustafson 1970:1)

Gustafson proposed the solution to this problem, noting that 90 percent of Buddhists in Thailand are not Buddhists but rather an amalgamation of elements of Buddhism, Animism, and **Brahmanism**. He, therefore, developed new approaches to conversion by using what he called, **"dialogue plus encounter,"** based in Scripture. Then Gustafson applied these ideas in practice in **1977** in northeast **Thailand**.

His ministry has been successful by using some of the principles of the meek approach mentioned in this dissertation, but he encountered some problems in his own approach of **"dialogue plus encounter."** He evaluated his own case in the northeast part of Thailand as follows:

There is nothing harder than being honest with one another and countering values that need to be countered. Thai culture has a natural tendency to avoid such encounters, and **Western** culture is similar. (Yamamori 1995:28)

But the ministry of Gustafson is unique in various ways: (1) his organization had worked together with the Church of Christ in Thailand (C.C.T.) for six years. C.C.T. used dialogue as a way to win souls and held to an ecumenical theology, (2) his organization, the Center for Church

Planting and Church Growth (CCPCG), started in 1977, was formally admitted as a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (E.F.T), which used encounter as a way to witness and held to an evangelical theology.

The ministry of Gustafson focused on holistic ministry from its inception and still struggled in a number of areas with spreading the gospel in Northeast Thailand in a culturally relevant way. His organization bought a piece of land in the **northeastern** part of Thailand. Gustafson started many agricultural projects for Christians in a number of villages. He had many agricultural specialists. They trained Christians how to raise pigs, fish, and local agricultural crops. Those Christians **learned** how to make money and they sustained their lives in their contexts. This holistic ministry was operated through local Christian communities called *Moo Ban* (village). Some Buddhists in a village also received benefits from these projects as well.

Gustafson demonstrated the meek approach by presenting the gospel in an indigenous way (Yamamori 1995:25). He stressed family-focus conversion. The gospel was presented with the grain of social **networks--to** family members and friends (Yamamori 1995:25). His ministry developed positive attitudes toward Buddhism. He wrote:

The team focused on doing the gospel at the grassroots level. Those who were gifted in **"holy gab"** spent time in the villages talking about Jesus Christ the Living Word (similar to the Buddhist concept of *Dharma* or word of Buddha.) (Yamamori 1995:25)

Gustafson developed a new attitude toward Thai **culture**. In early **1990** the Institute for Sustainable **Development (ISD)** was started to take responsibility for doing the research and curriculum development as well as the basic training work in **ethnomusicology**, Northeast Thai **culture**, Contextual Theology, Communications and Northeast Thai arts, sustainable and integrated **agricultural**, and sustainable development (Yamamori 1995:24).

He trained missionaries and Thai Christians to know and understand the people who are to be approached with the gospel. He demanded that the communicator be one of the community he is seeking to reach (in heart and mind if not in fact) (Yamamori 1995:24).

By his method, Christians and missionaries became insiders of the communities, and credibility of Christians and missionaries is high. The credibility of the church is high, too. Gustafson countered the aspects of the local value system among church members that are counter to the values of the gospel. In all societies there are values that are counter to the gospel. These must be countered in the love of Christ if the new believers and the church they will form are to be strong and healthy in Christ. Gustafson has developed an approach of dialogue teaching that involves everyone in the community in the process of **learning**. He said that it is in such a context that confrontation is best handled. Growth in maturity takes place **only** as there is a healthy and loving countering of values in the society that are counter to those in the word of God (Yamamori 1995:27).

Taking the principles of the meek approach which Gustafson used in his **ministry**, his organization successfully planted churches. He gave the following statistics: (Yamamori 1995:24)

Month	Year	No. of Churches	Members
April	1977	0	0
December	1977	5	not mentioned
<hr/> 1993		200	3000

Gustafson's ministry confirmed that the more principles of the meek approach applied in the ministry the more we see the fruits, especially the holistic ministry.

Conclusion of Christian Witness of Missionaries to the Thai. **Why** did James Gustafson, **Junck**, the **early** part of the Christian witness of Hong, and the later part of the unknown Christian in San Luis Obispo work positively toward the meek approach? The above incidents demonstrate clearly that each of them applied a number of elements of the meek approach in their Christian witness. Gustafson contextualized the gospel by using **Dharma**--a Buddhist word. He started his witnessing in a basic unit of the **society--villages--where** the gospel flows along the line of families and friends. His attitude toward Buddhism and Thai culture is commendable. He used elements in both systems to convey the meaning of the gospel. Junck cared for Ubolwan personally. He even lifted up Buddha as a good man but had wisdom from God to lift up Jesus as God. His comparison was clever. The first part of Hong's witnessing impressed Ubolwan because of Hong's

credibility. He applied the Bible as benefits and help to Ubolwan. He did not push her to accept Christ but allowed time for her to **learn** about him. Each gospel communicator ended his Christian witness **with** success. But those who failed in their Christian witness developed negative attitudes toward Buddha, challenged Buddhists by threatening them with hell, or used a preplanned encounter. Christians who demonstrated their Christian witness **aggressively**, but later humbled themselves to confess their failure to Buddhists could be used by the grace of God to bring those Buddhists to Christ.

#### Inclusive Applications for Missionaries and Thai Christians

Taking the above incidents and reasons into consideration I want to suggest my insights to those missionaries and Thai Christians who ask me how they can apply this meek approach in their actual practice in the Thai context. Again, I want to make it clear that it is not my purpose to tell missionaries and Thai Christians what they should do. But I feel that it is my responsibility as a researcher to be able to answer to those missionaries and Thai Christians. This section is **concerned** with my personal suggestions as an insider and a researcher. I would like to encourage missionaries to take risks in their Christian witness by applying these principles of the meek approach in their Christian witness.

I also **learned** that American missionaries have **Western** mindsets, denominational strategies, policies, and even theology with them to serve the Lord in Thailand. They may receive training in the United States in their

**Christian** witness for many years. Some of them may be sure about their ways of doing things. Some of them unconsciously think that just as American scientists and engineers could send American men and women into space successfully so American missionaries could carry the message of Christ into the hearts of the Thai successfully. American astronauts must study about space **seriously**, but in communicating the **gospel**, missionaries seldom study Buddhism and Thai culture seriously. They do not allow the context to shape their thinking or their strategies and policies. Some of them have personalities which are not easily adjusted. Some of them unconsciously rely on **Western** culture more than on biblical teachings without knowing that Jesus' ways are not the same as **Western** Christianity in many ways. These problems need to be understood, aware of, and accepted by the national leaders and missionaries who are affiliated with the Church of Christ in Thailand (**C.C.T.**), the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (**E.F.T.**), and the **Southern** Baptist Mission in Thailand (**S.B.M.T.**).

Though the problems may be real and sometimes overwhelming to missionaries, **I** would like to encourage American missionaries to make an effort through training to minimize their resistance to the meek approach by starting with an element with which they are most comfortable. Dodd (**1995**) suggested that missionaries and Thai Christians must realize that they are the ones who are responsible to change **themselves**, not Buddhists. Then missionaries should apply each element in their experiment in Christian

witness. A better **result** derived by using the meek approach will encourage missionaries to try harder in some other elements.

I discovered that some missionaries in Thailand who **learned** new things from the context and wanted to apply new methods in their ministries would encounter resistance in the form of peer pressure from their missionary senior friends. Some of them are viewed by the majority as strangers threatening authority. C.C.T., **E.F.T.**, and **S.B.M.T.** should help their leaders and missionaries by educating them and suggest to them that all Christian organizations study this knowledge in a seminar, conducted yearly by Thailand Protestants Coordinating Committees (**T.P.C.C.**), an existing working group in Thailand. It is like the language requirement which is enforced by E.F.T. All E.F.T. missionaries must study Thai language for two years and pass the *PhorHook* (grade six) exam. E.F.T. should propose this special seminar in consultation with leaders of all organizations. I believe that this kind of training will shape the Christian missions in Thailand greatly.

After missionaries receive a training, I would like to encourage missionaries to record their experiments in their diaries. These diaries may serve as evidence, data, and sources to adjust the policy of their denominations in due time.

It seems to me that this great change should be accomplished on the personal level, the administrative level, and the denominational level. Though we see various problems in each level, I think we should at least

raise this matter for discussion on each level. It should start with the personal level and move toward the denominational level. I believe that if all missionaries see the needs and the source where their needs can be met and believe that their ministries will be fruitful, then the Lord will guide each one of us until we see this kind of seminar conducted officially for all missionaries and Christian leaders in all denominations in **Thailand**.

The responsibilities of missionaries in this matter are overwhelming and sometimes cannot be carried out by individuals. Even to think about what missionaries should change in their strategies and mission approaches seems to be discouraging. Generally **speaking**, I believe it will be easier for Thai Christians than for missionaries to change their ways in Christian witness and apply the meek approach in their ministries.

I would like to provide both groups with some suggestions of small steps to take in applying the meek approach in their ministries as individuals. They can begin from their present ministries onward. First, I would remind Thai Christians and missionaries to discover where Thai Buddhists are now and suggest that we can present the gospel which appeals to their need. We can **incarnate** the gospel in deed and in word as Jesus did.

Thai Buddhists are proud of their identity. Any violation of their identity is prohibited. Christians should not compare religions or mention the king in an improper manner. Christians are able to come closer to Buddhists by developing a sincere relationship with them. Successful

ministries do not depend on tasks of missionaries but on sincere relationships without strings attached. A genuine relationship often leads to a genuine conversion. A structured or a planned relationship is seldom successful in Christian witness. Buddhists require a longer time to change just as missionaries require time to change some of their behavior to minister to the **Thai**. Thai culture is a hierarchical culture. Cultural behavior-words and **deeds--is** prepared in detail to enable people to deal with each other properly. Roles and status are important in developing a deep relationship. Missionaries who are able to develop their relationships so they are considered insiders by the Thai will be successful in their ministries. Proficiency in Thai language and culture is necessary for all missionaries who are going to work in Thailand. Prince Damrong said that pioneer missionaries he met spoke and wrote Thai language fluently. He said that if one did not see them **speaking**, one would not know whether the person heard or the alphabets written was done by a Thai or an American. For example, Bradley's hand writing was better than the hand writing of the Thai. All pioneer missionaries lived like Thais in many ways. Many of them lived on *Paaes* (houses on bamboo rafts).

Thai Buddhists communicate through nonverbal elements more than verbal elements. One can observe the meek elements in Chapter 6. Most of them are nonverbal. They are things like **missionaries'** attitudes, relationships, time, and sincerity. All words, deeds, language and facial expression or bodily movement can be interpreted by Thai Buddhists, and

they will affect relationships. Only insiders or those who are interested in Thai culture or who live in Thailand long enough or who deal with the Thai for many years will begin to grasp these expressive languages in Thai culture.

Someone said to me that if you fail in **Christian** witness in Thailand, try kindness. It works. A **Christian's** face which radiates the joy of Christ is more convincing of Christian **faith** than many words. Buddhists who come to the church observe Christians' faces more than they listen to the gospel. This does not mean that Christians should not communicate verbally the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have to tell others the gospel. But the verbal telling should come at a later time. Living the gospel in front of them is the most convincing way to draw Buddhists to Christ.

How can missionaries know about these things? **First, I** suggest that missionaries should seek a good Thai Christian as their closest friend, with whom they can talk, discuss, and ask many kinds of questions. Missionaries learn best in the context, and they can learn very fast by asking the **Thai--** both Buddhists and Christians. The more they behave as **learners**, the **more** they will be effective in their ministries. At present, there are very few missionaries who have Thais as their closed friends. They have many Thai acquaintances, but not close friends (*Puerm Tae*), with whom missionaries can sleep, eat, share burdens, and completely trust.

Second, they should prepare themselves by reading books on Buddhism and Thai culture, especially those by Komin (1991), Fieg (1980

and 1989), Holmes and **Suchada (1995)**. A number of good books about Thai culture which **missionaries** and Thai Christians should read can be found at **Chulalongkom** University Bookstore in Bangkok. Books about Buddhism can be read from the library of **Maha Chulalongkom Rajawittayalai** in Bangkok. Many Americans enjoy studying Thai people from books, and, this is good, but the best way is to live among them.

Third, they should live among the Thai in their daily **lives**, especially when they first arrive in Thailand. Living with the Thai and behaving as **learners** are the most wonderful things for missionaries. The Thai are not tired of teaching or sharing when missionaries ask. They should put the things that they **learn** from books or from their closest friends into practice by living among the Thai and by dialoguing immediately if they have questions. Most Thais without tiring are willing to tell missionaries about Thai culture, language and Buddhism. This is a good opportunity to develop a relationship with Buddhists in a real context. The present missionaries in many organizations prefer to live among missionaries. This is comfortable and secure and some missionaries are even required to start that way.

Fourth, missionaries and Thai Christians should keenly observe the nonverbal messages of the Thai. This observation requires time and serious study and should not be taken for granted. They should seek to **learn** a number of elements of meek behavior in Thai daily lives and develop these elements in their inner being without pretending. **I have learned one truth**, that if we love anything or any person in a real way, our nature and behavior

seem to be shaped by the one whom we love or the things that we love.

Missionaries who love the Thai people **greatly**, seem to adjust to Thai culture and understand Thai people more deeply than those who just want only to win the Thai to Christ or those who come for a short term program, or those who want to be missionaries to gain their qualifications for their further studies or advance their careers.

**Missionaries** who are **work-oriented**, diligent and serious in serving the Lord, and who take Thai culture for granted will not be fruitful in their ministries, but missionaries who are people-oriented, willing to pay attention, and willing to learn from the Thai seem to see fruit naturally in due time.

Fifth, I would **like** to encourage missionaries and Thai Christians to have small group discussions among the following persons as much as possible. They are: **(1)** missionaries, (2) Buddhist scholars, (3) Thai Christians, (4) Buddhist monks, and (5) Thai pastors. These discussions can be conducted casually or informally. The reason behind them is to open ways for Christians and missionaries to learn and ask questions and adjust their attitudes and behavior as soon as possible. This kind of meeting may be more fruitful than a seminar because Christians ask questions right away from the context, and are able to adjust their ministries for optimum efficiency as soon as possible.

#### Christ's Way of Meekness in Christian Witness

If Jesus Christ were a Thai, how would he present his message in Thailand? He would demonstrate his meek approach in all six principles

mentioned in this dissertation to the Thai because meekness is one of the marks of the humiliation of **Christ**. It is also grounded more fundamentally in the interrelationships of the Trinity. He lived in this world and was subjected to physical restrictions such as birth, education, passion, and death. Those who want to serve the Lord in Thailand must clothe themselves with all humility (Acts 20:19). Jesus Christ shows the meaning of self-humiliation by becoming obedient unto death, even the utmost shame of the cross. He had no other support than the incredible promise of the faithfulness of God (Psalms 22; 25:18; 31:17; **90:3; 119:50,92, 150**). Jesus Christ had to be meek in order to provide salvation to the whole world (Philippians 2). Jesus Christ is meek and lowly in heart. He humbled **himself** by **learning** the cultural knowledge from his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary. He **learned** how to be a carpenter. He dialogued with the religious men in those days. He asked questions in his ministry. He was submissive before God, completely dependent upon God and at the same time humble before men whose servant and helper he had become (Luke 22:27; Mark **10:45**; Matthew 20:28).

It is seen clearly from the Scriptures that throughout **Jesus'** ministry his message or witness is characterized by his appropriateness to the situation within which he was working and especially to the people with whom he was dealing (Kraft **1991:143**). He contextualized the message of the Kingdom to fit the people's mindsets in those days. **For** the **learned** man like **Nicodemus**, he used the Old Testament to explain his truth, but for a

woman who committed adultery, he showed his mercy and love by protecting her from stoning by the Jews, and he pronounced his forgiveness upon her. Jesus brought benefits and help to many people and then brought them to faith in Him (John 5; Mark 10:46-52). Although he could be harsh **with** the Scribes and Pharisees, with other audiences he was **more** often winning and even tender, as with the various people to whom **he** brought the benefits of physical healing and help, the woman at the **well** (John 4), the woman taken in adultery (John **8:1-11**), Thomas (John **20:24-28**) and Peter (John **21:15-19**). This last passage exemplified not **only** Jesus' **tenderness** but his great ability to use questions to lead his receptors to understand what he wanted to get across (Matthew 12:18; 21:23-27).

The Scriptures say Jesus chose his audience, the Jews (Mark 7:26-27). John the Baptist and Jesus had different lifestyles and therefore appealed to different groups. He knew the people to whom God sent **him to** minister. He cried for them. He helped them out of their problems **and** tragedies. He lived with them and invited some of them into his place **to learn** about him (John **1**). He developed long-term relationships **with many people--his** disciples, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John **11**). He ministered along the social networks.

Though Jesus is God, he has never manipulated people to accept him. He allowed people to decide to believe him or reject him (Matthew **19:16,17,20-22**). Jesus has never threatened anybody. He is **people-**oriented and he accomplished the work which his Father asked **him to do**.

He said, "**It is finished.**" Jesus shows ultimate sincerity. Though he is **God**, he also **learned** that communication effectiveness does not always result in the acceptance of his message, for receptors have their own will and frequently choose to reject what they understand.

Jesus also used indigenous media and strategies to present his message. Matthew **13** demonstrates this fact. He knew how to explain the truth about the Kingdom of God to ordinary people. He used simple things in nature to explain the complexities of **life--birds**, water, food, light, vine, wind, wheat, flower, salt, and pearl. He never looked down upon the religion in which he lived in those days. Those who committed to him he dealt with gently and personally. He was **incarnated** to live with the poor and the oppressed. He did not look down upon secular roles and status. He was a **carpenter**. All people in the communities in those days knew him as the son of Joseph. He was **concerned** about society. He involved himself in charitable works and he solved problems for the people. The felt needs of many were met by his active approach.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the value of meekness in Christian witness, I want to end this dissertation with the following suggestions for missionaries and Thai Christians in Thailand. I want to propose six recommendations for missionaries. The conclusions of this research and recommendations based on them are consistent with what one would find in the normative literature on Christian witness and evangelism. The first recommendation is

that taking the model of Jesus Christ as a guide as one who demonstrated the meek approach to the people in his days, it is **clearly** evident that when missionaries follow the meek approach to the Thai in their Christian witness as suggested in this dissertation, they simply bring Christ into Thai **culture**. The Thai will see Christ as the one who deals with them in the Thai way of meekness. The meek approach is **Christ's** approach. If Jesus Christ were a missionary to the **Thai**, he would demonstrate his witness along the grain of Thai culture. The meek approach is the way of Christ and also culturally relevant.

Taking the above reason into consideration, it is obvious why it is important for missionaries to have positive attitudes toward **Buddhism**. It is not helpful to think or say that Buddhism is from Satan, or Buddha is in **hell**. If missionaries do, then Buddhists who are the very people missionaries want to reach and **help**, will reject Christ out of hand. Missionaries do not want that. It is like a Thai Christian who talks negatively about missionaries' works in Thailand. That Thai Christian may receive the same result from missionary community. I do not ask missionaries to accept all the teachings of Buddhism. I encourage them to accept Buddhists who hold a particular belief, or **Buddhists'** right to hold a particular belief (Netland 1987:81). To deny this is to suggest that we can only respect and treat properly those with whom we happen to agree. But surely this is nonsense. Is it not a mark of maturity to be able to live peacefully with, and act properly toward, **those** with whom we disagree? Missionaries should take small steps in setting their

new attitudes toward Buddhism by studying ~~it--its~~ history, essence, ethical teachings. This, I believe, missionaries can do. The person who has carefully studied local religion can confront its error more powerfully. Missionaries can help Buddhists to move closer to Christ, even just a bit more toward him. Looking down upon their religion, **however**, only moves them farther away from Christ, not closer to him. Missionaries and Thai Christians do not want that.

The second recommendation is for missionaries to have a positive attitude toward Thai culture. They should not force the Thai or show favoritism. They should not separate Thai Christians from Thai Buddhists and take converts out of their community and out of their social networks, leaving them to cling only to the church. Threatening Buddhists is prohibited. Missionaries and Thai Christians should take a small step in the easiest thing they think they can do. A missionary should have a good and mature Thai friend with him or her as a counselor and learn from him or her. When they see the Thai do things, they should search for deeper meanings which may be hidden behind what they see.

The third recommendation is for missionaries to develop long-term, sincere, genuine relationships with Buddhists with no strings attached. The key concept is to bond with them, to become insiders in a community by showing interest in their felt needs, joining in the rituals the Bible allows them to do such as wedding ceremonies, death ceremonies. Missionaries should take a small step in developing a habit of *Jai Yen* (cool heart). Their

goal should not be **work-oriented** but **fellowship-oriented**. The deeper fellowship they develop with the Thai, the more fruit they will **experience**.

The fourth recommendation is that missionaries **emphasize** the benefit and help of the gospel without ignoring or neglecting the cost of discipleship. The formula may be near, new, now, and narrative. The Thai are interested in the things of this world. They should move from known to unknown. Evangelism is not presentation of the gospel in words only, but in deeds, with the purpose of reconciling men and women to Christ (Rainer 1989:77). Missionaries should be **concerned** with the needs of Buddhists and understand their feelings. They should mention the names of receptors quite often in their conversation. This shows that missionaries are interested in the lives of the Thai. Missionaries should ask them, "**What** do you feel about . . . ." not "**What** do you think about . . .". Feeling is what they perceive in their daily living. Missionaries should know that relationships win all, not task.

The fifth recommendation is that missionaries allow a longer time for the gospel to diffuse in the lives of the Thai. "**JaiYen Yen**" is the phrase that the Thai use. It means that missionaries should develop a new consciousness of the concept of time. God's time is what we want for the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. We do not want our own time or **Western** time. Missionaries should take a small step in developing this habit by simply removing their watch. Jesus did not have his wrist watch, but he was always aware of God's timing. They should live in

Thailand for a period of time without worrying about the time. Though it may be very difficult and frustrating for some missionaries, they should know that this is an experiment and part of their training.

Finally, the sixth recommendation is for missionaries to present the gospel with indigenous strategies. By this, I mean: **(1)** missionaries should seek to find meaningful indigenous media to pass the contents and the meanings of the gospel to the Thai, **(2)** missionaries should establish their credibility, so that the Thai will accept missionary's lives and words easier, **(3)** missionaries should develop **family-focused** evangelism, **(4)** missionaries should demonstrate social **concern** to **fit** the needs of the **Thai**, and **(5)** missionaries should find suitable roles and status in the society in which they live so that the receptors of the gospel will know who they are and are able to communicate with them properly. By following the previous five steps noted above and paying attention to five more elements discussed in the sixth recommendation missionaries will know the relationship between Thai words that they study and the deep meanings in the **Thais'** lives in their culture, religion, needs, relationships, and social networks.

### Summary

This chapter is **concerned** with missiological applications. I demonstrated a number of cases in my Christian witness in Thailand both with Thai Christians and with missionaries. All are true stories in the past and some were recently experienced in Thailand. Some Christians such as

Klinhoom and Gustafson are presently working right now and are very fruitful in the North and the **Northeastern** part of Thailand.

I also demonstrated the meekness of Christ found in the Scriptures, and I **learned** that Jesus demonstrated the same meek approach in his time as I am recommending that we use in our time. I use his lifestyle to encourage missionaries and Thai Christians in Thailand to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ. By doing so, missionaries will demonstrate Christ and bring Christ to the Thai. This demonstrates that the meek approach is Christ's approach which is both biblical and culturally relevant in the Thai culture.

In conclusion, I also encourage missionaries to take steps toward the meek approach. By God's grace, I believe that missionaries **will** then see fruits in real conversion in the ministry of missionaries and Thai Christians in Thailand.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

### Case Studies for Response of Missionaries. Thai **Christians**, and Thai

#### Buddhists

I recently studied the life and work of "**Mo Bradley**," an American medical missionary to Siam from **1835-1873**. He recorded his work in his diary. I selected a number of incidents which I am going to read for you, and I hope you **will** please share your ideas and feelings about his method of propagating the gospel among the Thai.

#### The First Incident (**November 18, 1868**)

While waiting in the hall I had a long talk with Phya Booroot on what the Siamese **government** now needed to lift it up among the nations of the earth. He led me into the conversation by asking me how such an improvement could be made. The **first** step I proposed was that the **government** abandon the worship of idols and sustain the worship of the living and **eternal** God; second, that it abolish slavery; third, that it prohibit gambling; and fourth, that it encourage the spread of all kinds of intelligence, establishing common schools, academies, colleges and universities. **Referring** to the first, second and third propositions, the Siamese nobleman dissented in many particulars. But in regard to the fourth he said he would go the whole figure (Feltus 1936:281).

Question 1: What do you think about the missionary's suggestion to Phya Booroot?

### The Second Incident (February 16. 1857)

The daughter of **Somdet** Phra Ong Noi first requested me to teach her the Ten Commandments. I did so. She inquired why it was wicked to worship idols. I explained the reason to her. She saw **clearly** and said to those about her, that what I said was true. I then proceeded to tell her that all the work of building idol temples and making idols, making priests, feeding them and so on is sin. She inquired why it was that I condemned **all** such work. I said it was because it is a violation of the expressed command of God. I then took occasion to say to her that Buddha was infinitely inferior to him who formed him. That Jesus himself atone was the maker of Buddha, that Buddha made no world nor any part of the world, as their books taught; that he lived by the power and grace of Jesus and that he died because Jesus made him die. That if he died a believer in Jesus he had gone to worship Jesus in heaven. But if he died an unbeliever in Jesus he must now be in hell (Feltus **1936:195**).

Question 2: What do you think of Mo Bradley's answer in the above incident?

Question 3: Do you think Bradley's ideas affected the propagating of the gospel in Siam?

### The Third Incident (February 22. 1851)

I held a religious discussion with the head man in the hearing of others. The old man finding himself feeble in argument finally said to me that he could not believe what I told him about Jesus unless I revealed his person. He went off pretending to triumph over me, because I said honestly that I could not show him the body of Jesus. I then addressed myself to

others who were about me and spoke ~~heard~~ as revealed by **his** works and power to **save**, the latter of which **I** could ~~from~~ blessed experience. **I**

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spoke out boldly against the folly and **dhism** and the **uselessness** and wickedness of making idol **temple** ~~making~~ priests of Buddha.

One man begged me to desist from **spe** ~~making~~ temples lest ft

should come to the King's ears and he should be angry. **I** told him that **I** must speak out and not at all afraid of the anger of his Majesty against me.

Afterwards, **I** spoke against the chief priest and suggested that **I** had in my boat at the landing a number of tracts **concerning** Jesus which **I** would like very much for him to read, and distribute to others under him (Feltus

1936:135).

Question 4: What are your ideas and feelings **concerning** Bradley's speech to the chief priests?

#### The Fourth Incident (September 6, 1868)

**I** went out to ask the Lord to direct my step, not knowing where **I** should stop to perform my wayside preaching. Having reached the court of Temple Chaeng **I** found quite a number of priests and laymen assembled, some doing **government** work and some engaged in idle talk. **I** sat down on a log among them while they huddled around me as if anxious to hear what **I** had to say to them about Jesus and his religion. **I** read from my tract the Miracles of Jesus. But ere **I** had read fifteen minutes my audience had nearly all left me as if **I** had nothing interesting to relate to them, and yet **I** have positive evidence that they understood sufficiently well for what **I** said and read to have made a deep impression on their minds.

hearers. **Today**, he had a fine opportunity to **distribute** tracts to a large company of royal personages and their attendants who came to make a present to Chao Fa Yai. The prince himself first proposed that he gives books to these individuals. It is pleasant to see by such a proof that there is nothing like introduction of our books in the King's palace or in the Royal Family. Who knows what amount of good the many precious tracts which Brother Caswell gave away today, and which will be **carried** into various of the royal families, **will** do (Feltus 1936:102).

Question **8**: Please tell me what do you think about the ministry of Rev. Jessy Caswell?

#### The **Eight** Incident (In 1867)

The Reverend and Mrs. Stephen Mattoon (**1847-1865**) and Dr. Samuel House, M.D. and his wife (**1847-1876**) were missionaries in Siam. They were **Bradley's** friends, and **I** hope you will think about the ways these missionaries led the Thai to Christ in the seventh incident below.

In **1848**, Mrs. Mattoon had begun to teach some little girls and boys and later she opened a school in Peguan village near the mission compound. Two orphaned children were taken into the home of missionary leaders in the Christian community. These were **Kru** Naa, given by his dying father to Dr. House in 1853, and Esther given by her father to Dr. and Mrs. Mattoon in the same year. Esther lived with them and when finally Mrs. Mattoon was obliged to **return** to America because of ill health, Esther accompanied her and the children. She **returned** three years later. Esther then continued to live with Mrs. Mattoon, teaching a little class of eight or ten

children to read Siamese. She united with the church in **1860**. Nai Naa married Esther in 1863 or 1864, before he had become Christian. He was baptized on February 3 and on November 2, **1867** was ordained **elder--the** first native Presbyterian elder to receive ordination. Nang Esther is still alive at the age of **eighty-four**, having outlived her four children but honored and cared for by over a hundred grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was the first woman convert and the oldest, living Protestant Christian in Siam (**McFarland 1928:45-46**).

Question 9: What do you think about the way these missionaries led the Thai to Christ?

The Ninth Incident (M = Missionary, W = Woman)

The ninth incident was recorded by Dr. Kosuke **Koyama**, a Japanese missionary to Thailand during **1960-1968**. The incident was a conversation between a missionary and a woman who lived in the **northern** part of Thailand. The woman had suffered from cancer. After reading the incident, I hope you will say from your viewpoint what did the woman expect from the missionary.

M. How are you today? I have come to visit you hoping that I may talk with you a few minutes about Christian religion.

W. I feel neither well or bad. If you want to tell me of your Dharma, you are a teacher of religion, **aren't** you? Go ahead.

M. **Yes, I** am a teacher of the Christian religion. This book I have in my hands is the Scripture. Just as the Tripitaka is very important to Buddhism. This book is very important for us. There is a

prayer, quite short and concise in the Scripture. The name of it is the Lord's prayer.

W. Just a minute. I am a north Thai woman. Speak to me in the **northern** dialect. You said you are a teacher of religion, didn't you? How can anyone be a teacher of religion unless he is at home with the language of the people? Speak to me in the dialect, I am tired of your poor **Thai** . .

M. I am sorry. I can speak only the Bangkok **Thai** . .

W. I thought so. You cannot! I don't like people like you. You missionaries are always trying to teach people while you really do not understand the people. The Buddhist monks are much better than you missionaries. I will call in a monk right now. I will listen to him. He will understand me. He can comfort me with his **Dharma**. He can speak my own language. You are wasting you time here. Go home. (Koyama 1974:89-90)

Question 10: After reading the incident, in your viewpoint, what did the woman expect from the missionary?

### The Tenth Incident

H.R.H. Prince **Damrongrajanuparp**, a son of King Rama IV (King Mongkut) wrote his observation about the **work** of American missionaries during Bradley's era. I hope you will say in your viewpoint what Prince **Damrong's** idea was when you listen to the work of missionaries in the present situation.

Prince Damrong wrote:

Speaking from my own observation, the present work of the American missionaries in this country has prospered beyond comparison with the work of their pioneers. The reason appears to me to be this: that the missionaries, having lived long enough in **Siam**, have come to appreciate the character of her inhabitants, and have changed their methods to suit such character. Thus instead of abusing Buddhism as the first step to the extolling of Christianity, they set about to exhibit Christian virtue, and thus inspire faith in a religion which possesses such good points. Aggressive works have been abandoned in favor of a gentler method, and the results must surely be more satisfactory from the missionary view-point. Whereas in the opinion of a contemporary foreign observer, the missionaries could not produce one good Siamese convert for every ~~£~~ **10,000** they spent sixty years ago, I imagine the present volume will show that such is very far from being the case today. **(McFarland 1928:14-15)**

Question 11: Please tell me, what do you think about Prince Damrong's idea when you listen to the work of missionaries in the present situation?

## Appendix 2

### Interview Questions for Missionaries

A. Tell me about your interest and acceptance of the gospel.

1. What first impressed you to be interested or not to be interested in Christianity?
2. Was there anything that made you hesitant to come to know Christ at **first**?
3. What caused you to make the decision to accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?
4. From whom did you hear the gospel?
5. How long did it take for you to be a Christian?

B. Tell me about your attitudes toward Buddhism.

What attitudes toward Buddhism should missionaries and Thai Christians hold?

C. Tell me about your attitudes toward Thai culture.

1. What was your feeling when you presented the gospel to the Thai?
2. What are the things that missionaries should do or should not do or say in order that they will communicate the gospel effectively?
3. What kind of winsome behavior or lifestyle of missionaries would convince a Buddhist to study Christianity or become a Christian?
4. If a Christian would like to develop a meaningful relationship with a **Buddhist**, please tell me about what a Christian should do and should not do?

D. Tell me about attitudes toward Thai Christians.

1. In your opinion, what impresses you about the following persons?

- (a) Jesus Christ
- (b) Missionaries
- (c) Thai Christians

2. In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of following persons?

- (a) Jesus Christ
- (b) Missionaries
- (c) Thai Christians

E. Tell me about sharing Christian faith with the Thai.

1. In your idea, what ways are appropriate for sharing the gospel with the Thai?
2. In what ways do you share the gospel with the Thai?
3. When you go to witness about Christ, did you use some methods to persuade them to become a Christian?

(Note: The author would like to measure the effectiveness of the Christian witness in two contexts: when it occurs in a natural encounter where the hearer is not aware of the method used by missionaries and Thai Christians and when it occurs in a designed encounter.)

4. What were your feelings **concerning** the Christian witness?
5. Please tell me about your idea after seeing **"Like' Payap"**

(Note: **Like'** Payap is a traditional Thai opera, conducted by the Department of Mass Communication, Payap University, **Cheingmai**, Thailand. Payap University is a Christian University, established by the Church of Christ in Thailand.)

6. In your **opinion**, what is the way for a new convert to tell his or her family about Christ?
7. What way of presenting the gospel would most appeal to Buddhists?

### Appendix 3

#### Interview Questions for Thai Christians

There are six major sections of questions in the interview . They are:  
 (A) interest and acceptance of the gospel, (B) attitudes toward **Christianity**  
 and/or Buddhism, (C) attitudes towards Thai culture, (D) attitudes toward  
 Christians and missionaries, (E) sharing Christian faith with the Thai.

It should be noted that cultural habit will prevent the Thai from being  
 openly expressive. If I ask in one word, they will answer in one word. That is  
 Thai way of answering questions. The Thai will respond very briefly to open-  
 ended questions which may provide no help to us at all. That is why I  
 prepared a number of questions for back up in case the initial questions do  
 not result in their sharing with me. I will do the interviews myself.

A. Tell me about your interest and acceptance of the **gospel**.

1. What first impressed you to be interested or not to be interested in  
 Christianity?
2. Was there anything that made you hesitant to accept Christ at  
 first?
3. What caused you to make the decision to accept Christ as your  
 personal Lord and Savior?
4. From whom did you hear the gospel?
5. How long did it take for you to be a Christian?

B. Tell me about your attitudes toward Buddhism.

What attitudes toward Buddhism should missionaries and Thai  
 Christians hold?

C. Tell me about your attitudes toward Thai culture.

1. What was your feeling when you heard missionaries and Thai Christians present the gospel to you?
2. What are the things that missionaries and Thai Christians should do or should not do or say in order that they will communicate the gospel effectively?
3. What kind of winsome behavior or lifestyle of missionaries and Thai Christians would convince you to study Christianity or become a Christian?
4. If a Christian would like to develop a meaningful relationship with a Buddhist, please tell me about what a Christian should do and should not do?

D. Tell me about attitudes toward Christians and missionaries.

1. In your opinion, what impresses you about the following persons?
  - (a) Jesus Christ
  - (b) Missionaries
  - (c) Thai Christians
2. In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of following persons?
  - (a) Jesus Christ
  - (b) Missionaries
  - (c) Thai Christians

E. Tell me about sharing Christian **faith** with the Thai.

1. In your idea, what ways are appropriate for sharing the gospel with the Thai?
2. In what ways do you share the gospel with the Thai?
3. When missionaries or Thai Christians came to witness to you about Christ and/or Christian **religion** did you think these people used some method to persuade you to become a Christian?

(Note: The author would like to measure the effectiveness of the Christian witness in two contexts: when it occurs in a natural encounter where the hearer is not aware of the method used by missionaries and Thai Christians and when it occurs in a designed encounter.)

4. What were your feelings **concerning** the Christian witness?
5. Please tell me about your idea after seeing "**Like' Payap**"

(Note: **Like' Payap** is a traditional Thai opera, conducted by the Department of Mass Communication, Payap University, Cheingmai, Thailand. Payap University is a Christian University, established by the Church of Christ in Thailand.)

6. In your opinion, what is the way for a new convert to **tell** his or her family about Christ?
7. What way of presenting the gospel would most appeal to Buddhists?

Appendix 4Interview Questions for Thai BuddhistsA. Tell me about **vour** interest in the **gospel**.

1. What made you interested or not interested in the gospel and the reason you have not accepted the gospel.
2. What first impressed you to be interested or not to be interested in **Christianity**?
3. When did you hear about the gospel?

B. Tell me about your attitudes toward Christianity.

1. What is your present idea and attitude toward Christianity?
2. What attitudes toward Buddhism should missionaries and Thai Christians hold?

C. Tell me about your attitudes toward Thai Culture.

1. What was your feeling when you heard missionaries and Thai Christians present the gospel to you?
2. What are the things that missionaries and Thai Christians should do or should not do or say in order to communicate the gospel effectively?
3. What kind of winsome behavior or lifestyle of missionaries and Thai Christians would convince you to study Christianity or become a Christian?
4. If a Christian would like to develop a meaningful relationship with a Buddhist, please **tell** me what a Christian should do and should not do?

D. Tell me about **your attitudes** toward Christians and **missionaries**.

1. In your **opinion**, what impresses you about the following persons?

- (a) Jesus Christ
- (b) Missionaries
- (c) Thai Christians

2. In your opinion, what are unfavorable impressions you have of following persons?

- (a) Jesus Christ
- (b) Missionaries
- (c) Thai Christians

E. Tell me about a Christian sharing Christian Faith with the Thai.

1. In your idea, what ways are appropriate for sharing Christianity **with** the Thai?
2. When missionaries or Thai Christians came to witness to you about Christ and/or Christian religion, did you think these people used some methods to persuade you to become a Christian?

(Note: The author would like to measure the effectiveness of the Christian witness in two contexts: when it occurs in a natural encounter where the hearer is not aware of the method used by missionaries and Thai Christians and when it occurs in a designed encounter.)

3. What were your feelings **concerning** the Christian witness?
4. In your idea, when listening about Christianity, whom do you want to hear **from**?

5. Can missionaries and Thai Christians improve their presentation of the gospel so the Thai will feel positive about the gospel? If so, how?
6. In your **opinion**, what is the way for a new convert to tell his or her family about Christ?
7. What way of presenting the gospel would most appeal to Buddhists?

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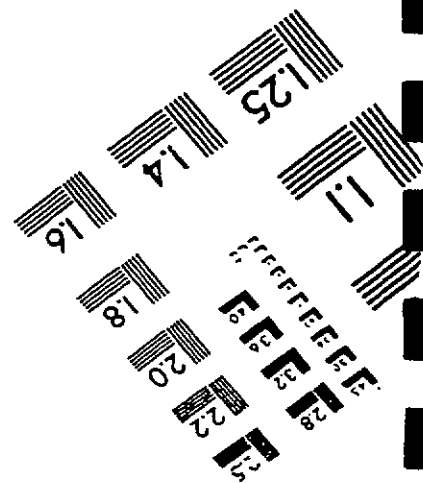
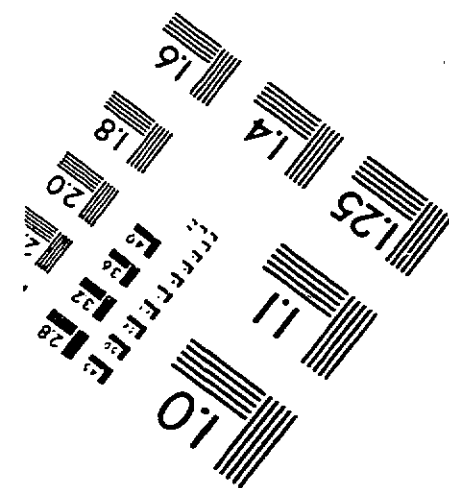
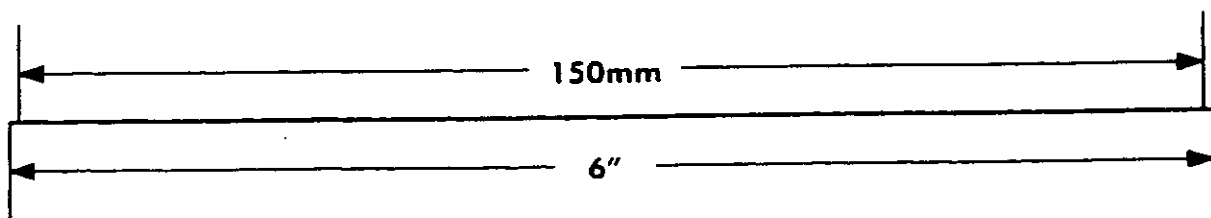
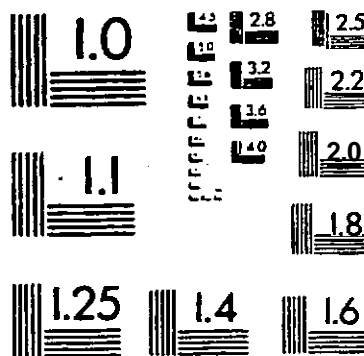
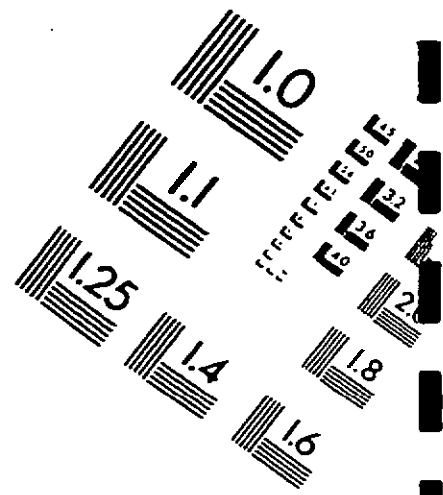
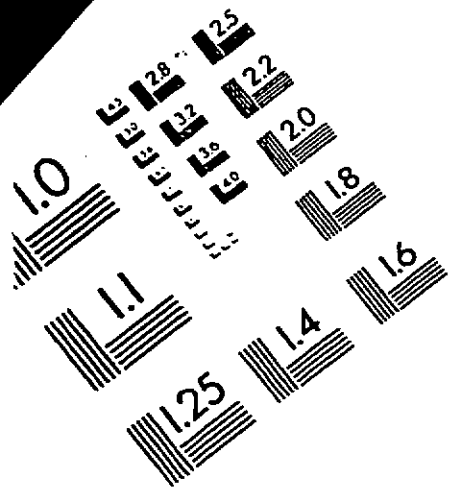
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