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A History of Baptist Missions in Thailand

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A HISTORY OF BAPTIST MISSIONS IN THAILAND

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ABFMS	American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society
ABMU	American Baptist Missionary Union
AMA	American Missionary Association
C.C.T.	Church of Christ in Thailand
CMA	Christian and Missionary Alliance
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Board of Foreign Missions
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists
TBMF	Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Disregard of history is a folly which cannot be ignored without dire consequences. Rightly or wrongly the old adage suggests "History repeats itself." Ignorance of history then becomes a blight that threatens the foundations of a people, an institution or an organization. The Church and her missions are not exempt, particularly those in the Third World today. In a day when social changes occur rapidly, attacks on the historical ethos mount with threatening crescendo. Where insufficient knowledge of historical foundations exists, chaos and instability in values, morals and attitudes can easily arise within the nation or the Church.

Purpose

History provides the heritage for Church and nation. It spotlights the hurdles that heroic men and women overcame in the process of their development. History throbs with the heartbeats and the heartbreaks of the forefathers. Like a searchlight piercing the pitch black of night, history also beams hope into the unknown future by highlighting principles for wise application. No greater need exists for this today than in some of the churches and nations of the Third World.

In Thailand or Siam¹ about 150 years of Baptist missionary

¹Siam is the name formerly used for Thailand. The people are called Siamese or Thai, the latter incorporating a number of related groups. In this writing Siam and Thailand are used interchangeably, though historical occasion often dictates which is more appropriate.

activity has passed. But to my knowledge not one single volume in either English or Thai has been printed that gives a comprehensive historical overview of Baptist work in Thailand. No detailed textbook has been published or developed even in the Baptist Seminary on Siamese Baptist Church History. The closest available material is a historical sketch of Protestant missions compiled by Kenneth E. Wells.² Dr. Wells abridged S. G. McFarland's earlier volume and updated it.³ According to Well's purpose of compressing a lot of material, his book is broad in scope, somewhat sketchy on Church Growth, and highlights the dominant Presbyterian missions prior to 1932 and the Ecumenical Movement of the Church of Christ in Thailand after that date. His book is valuable, but falls short of an adequate history for Baptist churches.

It is therefore my purpose to reconstruct a history of the Baptist mission work in Thailand and of the Baptist churches that emerged. Such a history will provide the major flow of Baptist development in Siam. It will analyze and evaluate the growth of Baptist churches. The effect of rather sporadic missionary efforts and of the historical forces on the Church will be noted. Church Growth factors such as receptivity, ethnicity, national evangelism, home missions and local leadership will be pinpointed. I will attempt to reconstruct indicators of actual growth of the churches among Baptists. I hope that this first attempt will be built upon by others to develop an adequate text for national churches to learn their historical heritage.

²Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1958).

³George B. McFarland, Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928, (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press Ltd., 1928).

Limitations

This study will limit itself to Baptists in Thailand except where significant data or summaries of other missions are needed to round out the development of the Church's progress. It will not give complete detailed historical data on Siam, the missionary societies, or the national Baptist churches. Nor will all Baptist workers or churches be mentioned by name. However, a comprehensive picture of the Church throughout the decades will be painted as far as data is available.

In the second chapter a brief survey of William Carey and Adoniram Judson will be given. Both were significant pioneer Baptist missionaries who broke new territory against great odds. Both played a part in the early evangelization of the Siamese, although neither of them placed a foot on Thai soil.

Some data gaps cause other limitations on this study. National church records were not kept adequately in earlier decades. Many valuable documents have been destroyed or lost inadvertently, especially during World War II. Also no national Church archives have ever been set up in Thailand to preserve valuable documents.

Furthermore, records of the Karen Baptist work were recorded mostly in the Karen script. Some were kept in Burma. Since I do not know Karen I acknowledge a limitation here. Nevertheless the bones, if not the meat, of the Karen missions in Siam is given. I hope that some keen-minded Karen student or churchman will produce a complete study of the growth of the Karen Baptist Church in Thailand before long.

Procedure

As far as possible I have used the earliest sources available to me to authenticate this study. My research included reading original missionary field correspondence of the Presbyterians (1840-1910) on micro-film as well as every book with reference to Thailand I have been able to locate in seminary libraries. I have also sifted through the Missionary Review of the World (1887-1939), the International Review of Missions (1911-1976), and world missionary atlases and encyclopedias.

I found Rev. S. J. Smith's chapter on Siam in Missionary Sketches: A Concise History of the Work of the American Baptist Missionary Union (1887) most helpful, as well as Along Kingdom Highways, annual reports of the American Baptist Missionary Society. I have consulted standard American Baptist histories including those by William F. Bainbridge, William Gammell, Winifred Hervey, Edmund Merriam and Henry Vedder.

Being myself a missionary in Thailand since 1964 has given me considerable advantage in this research. I know many of the current Baptist missionaries and am acquainted with many of the churches. My work with the Thailand Church Growth Committee has also provided me with wide opportunities to research and observe Christian work all over Thailand. I was able to gather data from missionaries, national leaders, pastors and laymen.

While I am sympathetic to the Baptists I have also been objectively detached from them. My home church is Baptist, but my mission in Thailand is an international and interdenominational one. I am a member of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, formerly called the China Inland Mission.

Having gathered the data for my research I reconstructed the historical progression as best as possible. I made particular note of the growth of the indigenous churches. I also analyzed and evaluated lessons from the past and applied them for future use. The omissions and gaps will, I trust, be filled in by others more informed than I. I also hope this will stimulate the Thai Baptist churches to learn more from their historical foundations and to apply valuable lessons carefully for their future growth.

The Peoples of Siam

It is important to define briefly the peoples among whom Baptists worked in Siam during the early nineteenth century and onward.

The dominant peoples of Siam by that time were the Thai. They were divided mainly into the Siamese in the center and the Lao in the North. The Siamese held suzerainty over the Lao. The tribal Shan were also of the larger Tai race. All three were related peoples and were Buddhists, but they had animistic practices integrated into their folk religion.⁴ In the South were also a smaller number of Thai Muslims.

The second significant people in Siam were the Chinese. They were Buddhists and Confucianists. For many decades prior to 1930 the Chinese traders came down to sell their wares on junks. Frequently these Chinese men took Thai wives in Siam, although many also maintained Chinese families back in the homeland.

Most Chinese were located around Bangkok, the capital. As time went on government laws to control the Chinese helped toward their

⁴For a fuller description of the Thai and their religious beliefs see: Alex G. Smith, Strategy to Multiply Rural Churches (Bangkok: OMF Publishers, 1977), pp. 75-93.

assimilation into Thai society. In 1930 there were slightly more Chinese males in Bangkok than Thai males, but few Chinese women.⁵ After 1930 conditions in South China led to a greater migration of Chinese women as well as men into Thailand. One of the major problems among Chinese, especially in the early decades of missionaries, was opium smoking. The Siamese government tried to curb this.

The Chinese were a focal point of early missions to Siam, including the Baptists, because China was closed. Many missionaries, therefore, saw Siam and work with the Chinese there as merely a stepping stone towards China. This was also true of the Baptists.

Another important people for the Baptists was the Karen. According to W. C. Dodd an extensive Karen kingdom stretching from the Salween to the Mekhong existed when the first great Thai migration drifted down from China in the sixth century B.C.⁶ The dominant Lao and Siamese eventually displaced them in Siam. The majority of them remained in Burma, though large groups of them still spilled over into Thailand. The Baptists developed missions on both sides of the border. The Karen were spiritists, not Buddhists.

There were also the Mon or Peguan in whom the Baptists were interested. Most Mon in Siam were basically prisoners of war or refugees from Burma. At times many of the Mon were more friendly to Siam than they were to the ruling Burmese. This sparked a migration

⁵Siam: General and Medical Features (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press Ltd., 1930), p. 216.

⁶William Clifton Dodd, The Tai Race (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1923), p. 250-251.

towards Siam during frequent wars between the two countries. For instance during King Narai's reign the Mons revolted against the Burmese king. About ten thousand, including their families, immigrated to Siam where they settled down with the king's permission.⁷

Other tribal groups are not detailed here as they were not evangelized by the Baptists during the first century or so.

Early Mission Problems

Today it is hard to imagine the conditions confronting the early missionary in Siam. Communications were atrocious. None of the conveniences of telephone, telegraph or postal services were available. Roads inland were non-existent, and even little better than mud tracks in the Asian cities. The tedious travel from the USA to Bangkok took from eight to twelve months depending on the ship and the route.

Dangers to health abounded. Medical facilities were virtually non-existent. No electric fans or air conditioners tempered the ever-vating oppression of the intense tropical heat. Diseases, especially cholera, typhoid and malaria, were rampant. Death decimated missionary families.

Tradition, religious superstition and sometimes suspicious fanaticism rose as bulwarks of opposition to the entrance of Christianity. Ignorance and despotic vested interests added to these barriers. Authoritarian rulers holding absolute sway were worshipped by the people almost as powerful gods on earth. Some stood in defiance of the foreign missionary ambassadors and the Lord God they represented. Myriads of Buddhist

⁷Rong Syamananda, A History of Thailand, (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Co. Ltd., 1973), p. 72.

temples with their golden spires and tall roofs reaching up to the heavens bore silent witness of the stark reality that Siam was pre-eminently the land of Buddhism.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL BACKDROP TO BAPTIST MISSIONS IN SIAM

A clear view of the situation out of which Baptist missions to Siam arose is essential to comprehend the maze of difficulties which only determined faith in God and deliberate obedience to Christ's Great Commission could overcome. These obstacles included not only cross cultural barriers, but also hazards of health and travel. Furthermore, hindrances of Western and Asian governments abroad, and anti-mission theological prejudices of Christians at home, confronted the missionary as seemingly insurmountable mountains of discouragement. But looking ahead with eyes of faith and hope these bold pioneers were not deterred.

Pioneer Initiators of Baptist Missions

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Baptists such as William Carey of England and Adoniram Judson of America played a significant role in a new forward missionary movement. By obeying God's call to evangelize multitudes spiritually lost without Christ, such men surged ahead of their peers in incredible endeavours of foreign missions. They sparked off a sadly belated movement following the Reformation which until then had not issued in a strong worldwide mission to the ends of the earth. Like Paul "born almost too late for this"¹ William Carey became, as George Smith concludes in his biography, "the Father of the Second

¹I Cor. 15:8 The Living Bible

Reformation through Foreign Missions."² More commonly Carey is called "the Father of Modern Missions."³

Expanded in the next chapter are the vital roles Carey and Judson played in the first evangelization among the Siamese. Hence a brief look at these two great men is in order.

Significantly both men have similarities. Both were converted between eighteen and twenty years of age. Both accepted the Word of God as authoritative and studied it zealously in equal frame of mind. On their own convictions each of them changed from Congregationalists to become Baptists. Both were deliriously dedicated to mission. Their passion to see Christ proclaimed to the millions who did not know Him or the Gospel could well be emulated by us again today. Baptist foreign missionary societies were initiated by both of them.⁴ Both spent four decades in Asia, Carey in India (1793-1834), Judson in Burma (1813-1850). Both encouraged pioneer missions to other unreached peoples. Both were avid translators of God's Word into Asian languages. Both faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Indeed those were the days of giants in missions.

²George Smith, The Life of William Carey D.D. Shoemaker and Missionary (London: John Murray, 1887), p.381.

³Not that Carey was the first or only missionary since the Reformation. The Moravians had missions to various lands. Other individuals such as John Eliot (1604-1690) and David Brainard (1718-1747) ministered to American Indians. English and Scottish propagation societies to the Colonists and highlanders also existed, but Carey pioneered the modern Protestant Missionary Society.

⁴Edward Judson, The Life of Adoniram Judson (New York:Anson D.F. Randolph & Co.,1883), p.54,55. Judson helped initiate the Congregational Board (ABCFM) and the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, organized in 1814. He wrote, "Should there be formed a Baptist society for the support of a mission in these parts, I should be ready to consider myself their missionary."

Anti-Mission Pressures at Home

Carey faced opposition to missions from Baptist pastors and people in Britain patiently and squarely. Yet his burden, vision and determination were not swayed. Carey's mission idea was a revolutionary thought to the hyper-Calvinistic Baptists of his day. He was but a persevering catalyst moving against a mighty wave of unsympathetic theological bias, which excluded missions in its degeneration to fatalism and antinomianism.

This tenor of thinking twisted God's sovereignty and absolved men of responsibility. "If God wants to save the heathen, He will do it in His own way in His own time without your help or mine" was the common attitude. Carey was considered "a miserable enthusiast for asking such a question" as "whether the command given to the Apostles, to teach all nations, was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing the accompanying promise was of equal extent."⁵

Of course there were General Baptists also who held to general redemption rather than the extreme particular redemption of the elect. These Arminian Baptists, however, also failed to move forward in mission. Undeterred, Carey and his friend, Andrew Fuller, convinced a few Baptists to join them in forming the first Baptist mission, but this was against the tide of common Baptist concensus. In fact, many educated Baptist ministers in London virtually boycotted Carey's mission, denouncing his "madness." But in time Carey's pioneer spirit won the Baptists' change of attitude towards mission, slowly but surely.

Carey's Baptist Mission in India also prepared Baptists in America

⁵Smith, op. cit., p. 29.

for a change of attitude. When Judson wrote them, twenty years later, suggesting a Baptist Missionary Society be formed, there was speedy response in so doing. By 1812 Baptists in USA already had extensive reports from Carey.

Soon after arriving in India, following their change of denomination, Judson's fellow missionary, Luther Rice, returned to America. He entered wholeheartedly into stirring American Baptists to their missionary responsibility. In 1814 conventions for home and foreign missions were formed, and scores of auxiliary societies organized. Other Baptist missionary societies and associations soon sprang up.

But by 1820 a dramatic change of American Baptist attitude towards missions arose, especially on the frontiers.⁶ Baptist churches and associations withdrew funds from missionary undertakings. Soon the anti-mission sentiment was so overwhelming that none dared resist it. An active anti-mission crusade swept through Baptist churches until in 1829 "every Baptist Association in the West took sides."⁷ Baptist members were threatened with being taxed if they went to hear a missionary. Missionaries were denied the right to speak in churches.

Anti-mission associations were set up in some states. Numerous Baptist churches, especially those on the frontier, took this anti-mission stand between 1820 and 1840. By 1846 two-thirds of the anti-mission Baptists were in frontier states, where educational facilities were lacking. Though this sentiment was strongest in the frontiers, it was not absent from the older settled states.⁸

⁶William Warren Sweet, "The Rise of the Anti-Mission Baptists: A Frontier Phenomenon" in Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists 1783-1830 (New York:Cooper Square Publishing Inc., 1964), p.58-76.

⁷Ibid p.62

⁸Ibid p.64-67

The causes of this anti-mission attitude revolved around several factors. A doctrinal shift to hyper-Calvinism and opposition to formal academic theological education for a paid ministry lay at the root of it. A hostility to all societies promoting social or spiritual welfare was bred and flourished. Opponents levelled the charge that the primary object of missionaries was to get money. Beyond this was a fear that the missionary system was contrary to Baptist church government, and so threatened to destroy the democracy of the local church.⁹

Probably some enthusiastic promoters of missions used some unwise approaches. It was unfortunate that not only home but also foreign missions were equally attacked and curtailed, even while Judson and his associates were battling against great odds in Burma.

To the commendation of these missionary brethren and their wives, they did not pack up and come home. They were under higher orders from God. Despite the king's refusal for liberty to propagate Christianity in his dominion (1820), and the death of missionaries with their children, they stayed on with rigid and prayerful determination. They did not quit because of anti-mission sentiments and opposition from Baptist churches in America, nor were they there for pecuniary interests. So funding or no funding, they were sold out to do God's will.

Acknowledging a gift of fifty dollars from Rev. Grow of Thompson, Connecticut, Judson wrote:

The fact is, that we are very weak, and have to complain that hitherto we have not been well supported from home. It is most distressing to find, when we are almost worn out, and are sinking, one after another, into the grave, that many of our brethren in Christ at home are just as hard and immovable as rocks; just as

⁹Ibid, p.67-76

cold and repulsive as the mountains of ice in the polar seas. But whatever they do, we can not sit still and see the dear Burmans, flesh and blood like ourselves, and like ourselves possessed of immortal souls, that will shine forever in heaven, or burn forever in hell-we can not see them go down to perdition without doing our very utmost to save them.¹⁰

Ironically, in May 1828 at the height of the anti-mission fever in the USA, Judson renounced the title of Doctor of Divinity conferred on him in 1823 by Brown University,¹¹ and gave away his private property to the Baptist Foreign Mission Board.¹² He also asked the board to reduce his already meager allowance by one-quarter.¹³ During 1824 and 1825 when preachers at home were denouncing the missionary endeavour, Judson and others were languishing in cruel and filthy Burmese prisons, literally chained and fettered for the cause of Christ. Through much spiritual toil and tears Judson had baptized his eighteenth Burmese convert in 1822 and the one hundredth Karen convert in 1833. But such cause for rejoicing was foreign to bigoted, biased and intolerant hyper-Calvinistic Baptists in America at that time.

The personal sadness of the deaths of Judson's wife (1826), his little daughter (1827), his father (1827) and his brother (1829) was "also intensified by the slowness of American Christians in sending on reinforcements." At one point Judson felt like he had been left on the skirmish line almost alone. In a heartrending cry to the corresponding secretary he pointed out the devastating effect of the anti-mission movement:

I am startled and terrified to find that, by several unexpected moves, I am left, as it were, alone: there being not another foreigner in all the country that can preach the Gospel to the perishing

¹⁰Judson, op. cit., p.309. ¹¹Ibid., p.319.

¹²Ibid., p.317. ¹³Ibid., p.319.

millions, north and south, or feed the infant churches, except, indeed Mrs. Bennett, who has begun to take the management of the female meetings. My prayers to God and my entreaties to my brethren at home seem to have equal efficacy. Since the last missionaries left home, I perceive no further signs of life. All seem to have gone to slumbering and sleeping.¹⁴

This epitomizes the tragedy resulting from anti-mission sentiments at home. By withholding both personnel and support the Baptists almost scuttled the newly launched ship of missions at a strategic time for the Church's advance. Today, the Church faces similar subtle anti-mission feelings. Will the potential advance in the 1980's be frustrated by the self-centered biases contrary to God's Word and Christ's will?

Historical Scene Prior to Siamese Missions

In 1770 Captain Cook discovered and charted the east coast of Australia. Reports of Cook's travels fired Carey's imagination and heart already filled with interest in peoples around the globe, though he was yet without a godly vision of the lostness of mankind.

Indeed the decades between 1770 and 1830 were full of great excitement, new discoveries, and challenging national crises. Europe was in constant turmoil. Colonial claims and battles among the nations, especially Britain, France, Spain and the Dutch, fill the historical annals of this era. Occasional swapping of allied alignment in the struggle for power, frequent wars and temporary peace treaties dot the record.

Trouble also brewed in the new colonies. Following the 1773 Boston Tea Party the American Revolution broke out in full force (1775-1781). The Declaration of Independence in 1776 preceded Carey's conversion by just three years, from which time he "began praying daily for all the heathen and slaves."¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., p. 309.

¹⁵Smith, op. cit., p.36.

Ironically Adoniram Judson was born in Malden, Massachusetts, a suburban area of Boston, nine years later, just as the first settlement of Australia was underway in 1788.

The next year the storming of the Bastille in Paris opened the flood gates of the vicious French Revolution (1789-1794). England had been saved from a similar fate only by a moral and religious revival occasioned by the preaching of Wesley.¹⁶ Since 1738 John Wesley and his band of Methodists had fanned out from London on a spiritual and social campaign under God. This transformed the spiritual fibre of the nation through the quickening of personal religion. In a few decades cross sections of Britain's society was affected from peasant to parliamentary leaders, from seaman to admirals.¹⁷ Economic revolution accompanied the Industrial Revolution from 1760 onward. Social reforms were spurred on by the religious revival and the quickening of consciences of converted statesmen such as John Newton and the Earl of Shaftesbury.

In 1792 the House of Commons passed a bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. That same year Carey published his Enquiry,¹⁸ setting forth the challenge of the unfinished evangelistic mission of the Church to the whole world. He gave in survey form detailed accounts of peoples

¹⁶Henry Smith Williams, The Historian's History of the World, (New York: The Outlook Company, 1904), Vol. XXI, p. 482f.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens, in which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are Considered by William Carey.

in each country and called Christians to use their means to reach them.

Eight years previously a copy of Jonathan Edward's paper "Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth" had powerfully influenced Carey. With other Baptist ministers he met monthly in "prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit of God."¹⁹ Carey's concern was truly spiritual and consequently social and practical. By October 1792 "The Particular (Calvinistic) Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen" was formed, a pioneer in foreign mission societies.

In 1793 the French reign of terror began, the United States attacked British Canada and Carey sailed for India to embark on his famous missionary career. When in 1797 Napoleon began to fulfil his vision of an empire, Carey had just returned from his first long missionary tour among the Bhootas from Tibet who had overrun the eastern Himalayas through to Assam. Carey's great concern was "to spread the Gospel through the greatest part of Asia." Practical as ever, he suggested the need to implement a plan for all the necessary languages to be learned there in his Indian Mission.²⁰

Admiral Nelson won his famous naval victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 as Napoleon continued to consolidate his French Empire. In 1807 Carey opened a new mission to Burma. He sent two of his missionaries there, and his son Felix soon followed.

The year 1807 was also significant for Judson. He graduated as valedictorian of his class and started teaching in Plymouth.²¹ Despite his praying Christian parents, Judson had accepted the free thinking of French

¹⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 29 - 40.

²⁰Ibid., p.92.

²¹Judson, op. cit., p. 7.

infidelity²² which, enthroned as the "goddess of reason on the altar of Notre Dame,"²³ spawned the atrocities of the reign of terror. The sudden death of a young free thinking friend shocked Judson into considering the after-life and the claims of Christ. He was soundly converted and entered the theological institution at Andover (1808).

A printed sermon of a chaplain with the British East India Company moved Judson seriously to become a foreign missionary. Several similarly burdened students joined him to found a missionary society. They met for prayer at night beneath a hay stack near the college grounds. Out of this was born American foreign missions.²⁴

In 1810 Judson and his friends wrote the General Association of the Massachusetts Congregational Churches offering themselves in life commitment for missions. The General Association responded and formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

In 1811 the ABCFM sent Judson to consult with the London Missionary Society. On the way his English ship was captured by a French privateer. Judson was imprisoned. Fortunately an enterprising American businessman ingeniously rescued him three weeks later. Falling in with some officers of Napoleon's suite, Judson was entertained in his travels through France in royal style. After accomplishing his business in London he returned to America to finalize preparations to leave for India.²⁵

²²Ibid., p.10f. ²³Williams, op. cit., Vol. XXI, p. 482.

²⁴Judson, op. cit., p. 16-18.

²⁵Ibid., p.23-32.

On Feb. 19, 1812 Judson with Ann Hasseltine, his bride of two weeks, and Mr. and Mrs. Newell sailed for Calcutta. Four months later William Carey welcomed them warmly and invited them to await their fellow-workers at his mission in Serampore. During this time, having changed their doctrinal view, the Judsons were baptized by Rev. Ward on Sept. 6, 1812 in Calcutta. But as the 1812 - 1814 war between Britain and the United States broke out, the British East India Company no longer welcomed the Americans. Judson and his friends were forced to leave British India. The only practical option they had was to sail to Mauritius, the Isle of France. By May 1813 Mrs. Newell had died and Mr. Newell and Mr. Rice had left. The Judsons remained alone.²⁶

They decided to go to Penang in the Straits of Malacca with the intention of establishing a mission on that island. Penang's population was rapidly increasing through emigration from Siam, Burma, Hindostan, and China. The island, recently purchased by Britain, was only a stone's-throw off the coast of Siam. At that time Siam's territory extended far down the Malayan Peninsula. Had Judson's plan been fulfilled, he may well have been the first Protestant missionary to Siam. But when he and Ann sailed to Madras en route to Penang, the British authorities in Madras threatened to transport them to England as the war with Americans continued. With no available shipping to Penang Judson had only one other option, to sail immediately to Rangoon, Burma. This would take them into territory not under British or European protection. Realizing they would be under the rule of a Burmese despot, they sailed forth in faith, rather than return

²⁶Ibid. p. 41 - 47.

home.²⁷ That exhibited their intrepid dedication to their evangelistic mission.

Arriving in Rangoon on July 13, 1813, the American pioneers lodged in Felix Carey's almost deserted house. Thus the close connection between Carey and Judson continued.

Today we little realize the vital influence the complicated political forces and confused international events of the colonial decades played on missions. The above brief summary helps enlighten readers in the late twentieth century.

Colonialism remained a significant factor for more than a century after Judson arrived in Burma. But with Wellington's decisive victory at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, an era of comparative peace ensued. The power of Napoleon was broken. Britain remained in supreme rule of the sea and in large measure in control of economic trade, aided by her factories developed in the Industrial Revolution. The French did gradually regain strength to become a formidable colonial power to oppose Britain again in east Asia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This especially affected Siam, the land with which we are most concerned.

Siam was unique in being the only Southeast Asian nation to retain her sovereignty throughout the colonial era, despite the encroachment of the British and French on her borders. One secret of doing so was her adept diplomacy. Another was her love of freedom and independence. Thai means free.

To her credit Siam cautiously opened her doors to Westerners before China, Japan or Korea which remained closed nations, proud and suspicious

²⁷Ibid., p. 47-48.

of Western powers. Siam's opening played a crucial part in the introduction of Baptist missions to that kingdom.

Nevertheless, the attitude of King Rama III, the absolute monarch of Siam, was far from overwhelmingly sympathetic to missions. A fear still hung over the motivation of Christian missions, kindled by suspicions of earlier political involvements of the French Roman Catholics.

Early Roman Catholic Missions

Roman Catholics first entered Siam in 1511 when priests accompanied the Portuguese Embassy of Alfonso de Albuquerque. In 1555 two Dominican priests arrived, but both were soon martyred in 1566 and 1569 respectively. The first Jesuits came in 1607. The Paris Foreign Missionary Society followed in 1662. Other orders came later.²⁸

Strong resistance from the Siamese was met from the start in terms of conversion. Church growth was minimal. Most Catholic ministry was among the Portuguese and Christians of foreign origin.

Then during the 1680's a Greek Catholic adventurer named Constantine Phaulkon rose to prominence as a government minister in the court of King Narai, one of Siam's great rulers. Siamese jealousy arose and fear that the Catholics through Phaulkon were about to convert the king sparked off a violent anti-foreign revolution. It was particularly anti-French. In 1688 just before the death of King Narai, Phaulkon was arrested, tortured and beheaded. Catholic priests were banished or imprisoned. The death of Phaulkon and his violent fall shocked French officials and frightened the

²⁸The Catholic Directory of Thailand 1967, edited by the Jesuit Fathers (Bangkok: 1967), p. 10f.

tiny Catholic constituency. Following the Phaulkon Revolution²⁹ the Catholics made little inroads among the Siamese populations. Even a century later in 1785 the Roman Catholic Church in Siam totalled 1,372 only, comprised of 413 Siamese of Portuguese origin, 379 Cambodians of Portuguese origin, and 580 Annamites.³⁰ Most of these lived near the capital in Thonburi-Bangkok.

Thus a heavy blow fell on the Catholics over the Phaulkon affair. The anti-Christian repercussions reverberated down through the succeeding decades. That episode remained long in the astute minds of Siamese leadership and became a hurdle of hesitance towards Protestant missions also.

²⁹For a fuller description see Luang Sitsayamkan, The Greek Favourite of the King of Siam, (Singapore: Donald Moore Press Ltd., 1967).

³⁰The Catholic Directory of Thailand 1967, p. 11.

Chapter 3

EARLY BAPTIST MISSIONS TO THE SIAMESE

Since 1807 Baptists maintained missions in Burma. It might be anticipated, therefore, that they would be the first to project missions to Siam, Burma's next door Buddhist neighbour. But thirty years passed before the Baptists actually entered Siam.

However, God in His magnificent timing and in sovereign control provided an opportunity outside of Siam for the first witness of Christ to the Siamese. A woman was to have this privilege, and Siamese in unfortunate circumstances were honored in first hearing of Christ in their own language.

Forerunners in Burma (1816 - 1828)

Ann Hasseltine Judson was the first Protestant missionary known to work with the Siamese. Ann or Nancy, as she was affectionately called, never visited Siam. She worked in Burma with her pioneer husband, Adoniram Judson, from 1813 to her death in 1826.

In Rangoon and Moulmein were many Siamese prisoners of war. Both the Burmese and Thai were Buddhists, but they were inveterate enemies. Ann's interest in the numerous colonies of Siamese captives led to a deep concern to reach them. Judson encouraged his wife to learn the Siamese language.¹ Late in 1816 Ann began in earnest to do so. Her letter to a friend, dated the last day of April, 1818, indicated

¹Stacy R. Warburton, Eastward! The Story of Adoniram Judson (New York: Round Table Press Inc., 1937), p. 169.

that in the intervening year and a half she had translated into Siamese tongue the Burman catechism just prepared by Dr. Judson, a tract containing an abstract of Christianity (the View of Christian Religion) and the Gospel of Matthew.²

In his Journal, November 29, 1829, Judson listed the Burmese and other translations printed to date and confirmed that these three Siamese works were done by his wife.³ Ann also translated a Siamese book into English for amusement. It was an account of the incarnation of a Siamese deity when he existed in the form of a great elephant.⁴

In April 1819 Judson constructed a building called a zayat in Rangoon to use as an independent place for preaching and meeting with inquirers. This structure had three main sections: a verandah, a large airy middle room and an entry way opening into the garden leading to the missionary residence. In Ann's biography Arabella Stuart explains that during the week Mrs. Judson occupied the middle room giving instruction in reading to classes of men and women. She taught female inquirers as well. Here she also studied the Siamese language, much spoken in Rangoon, and translated into that language a catechism and

²Arthur T. Pierson, The Miracles of Missions (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1891), p.64.

³Edward Judson, The Life of Adoniram Judson (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1883), p. 338, 339.

⁴Courtney Anderson, To The Golden Shore. The Life of Adoniram Judson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), p.231.

the Gospel of Matthew.⁵ Thus the Judsons played a crucial role in the earliest witness to the Thai.

Surprisingly William Carey also had a part to play in this first evangelization of the Siamese. In 1819 Carey's Baptist Press at Serampore, India, was used to print the first Siamese tract and the catechism prepared by Ann Judson. Whether the Gospel of Matthew was also printed at the same time is not certain. No copies are extant.

Significantly the first known Siamese convert to Christ was won not in Siam, but in Burma. The early missionaries to Burma were concerned to reach all with the Gospel. They energetically witnessed to everyone including downtrodden Siamese who were victims of war or slavery. Their efforts were not fruitless. The first Siamese convert recorded in history was a young man named Moungh Shway-pwen. We have no details of how he was converted, who led him to Christ, or how he got to Burma. He may not even have been the first Siamese convert. Because his name is Burmese I suspect he may have been born in Burma of a Siamese prisoner of war or a slave. Possibly he knew Burmese well and was won through the preaching or reading of the Scriptures in that language. We do not know.

One thing is certain. When Mr. and Mrs. Boardman left Dr. Judson in Maulmain on March 29, 1828 to open a station at Tavoy, this young Siamese convert accompanied them. Also with the Boardman family went a Karen believer and four native school boys, presumably Burmese.⁶

⁵Arabella Stuart, The Lives of Mrs. Ann H. Judson and Mrs. Sarah B. Judson (Auburn and Buffalo: Miller Orton & Mulligan, 1854), p.88-89.

⁶Judson, op. cit., p. 344.

The Karen, a fifty year old man, was Ko Tha Byu, the first Karen convert in Burma. As a "wicked and ungovernable boy" he left home at the age of fifteen. He became a robber and murderer and finally ended up on the slave market because of debt. Schway-bay bought him and took him on as a servant, but because of his uncontrollable temper Schway-bay readily passed him on to Judson in return for payment of the debt. Patiently Judson dealt with Ko Tha Byu now under his employ. Judson's example and teaching gradually impressed him. He learned to read the Burmese New Testament. God's powerful Word began to transform him. Eventually he accepted Christ.⁷ Following his baptism by Mr. Boardman at Tavoy in 1828 Ko Tha Byu became the Apostle to the Karen, travelling and preaching extensively among the Karen.

Before April 1830 he also attempted to go into Central Siam to preach Christ but was hindered from entering. His companion, Maung Sekkee however was allowed in. He "preached and found some that listened."⁸ Presumably this was to Karen peoples in Thailand. Only nineteen months earlier the first missionaries had arrived in Thailand.

Gutzlaff's Call For Baptist Reinforcements

The pioneer Protestant missionaries to arrive on Thai soil were Carl Friedrich Augustus Gutzlaff, a twenty-five year old Lutheran German doctor, and Jacob Tomlin, an Englishman with the London Missionary Society. They arrived in Bangkok on August 23, 1828, and immediately

⁷Anderson, op. cit., p. 385-386.

⁸A. Q. Van Benschoten, Jr., "A Thailand Missionary" printed letter, Chiangmai, January 1954, p.1

began in earnest to distribute Chinese Bibles, dispense medicines, and commence studying Siamese and translating the Bible. They labored at a feverish rate.⁹

The enervating climate forced Tomlin to leave nine months later. In December 1829 Gutzlaff went to Singapore to print some of his translations on the Siamese type originally used on Carey's Baptist Press for Ann Judson's translations.

Gutzlaff and Tomlin sent a letter via Captain Coffin to America pleading for missionaries to come and help evangelize Siam. Unfortunately in 1829 many Baptists were in the feverish height of the anti-mission fervor and so were uninterested. In early 1830 Gutzlaff sent a second letter to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The ABCFM, Judson's original mission, responded and sent David Abeel, a medical doctor, to Bangkok. He arrived with the returning Tomlin on June 30, 1831. But Abeel, broken in health, left for good in November 1832. Tomlin had gone earlier in January that year.

Gutzlaff's main concern was for the evangelization of the world. He was not bound to denominational biases. In God's providence he also sent a similar letter calling for reinforcements to Judson and the Baptists in Burma about 1829. Gutzlaff's call was motivated by the need of many Mon and Burmese in Siam. No doubt this clarion cry for help deeply impressed Judson. But as already noted the Baptist anti-mission activism in America at that period had left

⁹Charles Gutzlaff, Journal of Three Voyages Along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, and 1833 (London: Thomas Ward & Company, Third Edition), p. 48, 54.

even Judson as a lonely sentinel on the front line. He himself pled for reinforcements. At the close of an imploring appeal for new men he wrote:

May God forgive all those who desert us in our extremity. May He save them all. But surely, if any sin will lie with crushing weight on the trembling, shrinking soul, when grim death draws near; if any sin will clothe the face of the final Judge with an angry frown, withering up the last hope of the condemned, in irremediable, everlasting despair, it is the sin of turning a deaf ear to the plaintive cry of ten millions of immortal beings, who, by their darkness and misery, cry, day and night, 'Come to our rescue, ye bright sons and daughters of America, COME AND SAVE US, FOR WE ARE SINKING INTO HELL.'¹⁰

In spite of few laborers for Burma the unevangelized millions in Siam still concerned Judson. In 1832 the Baptist Mission in Burma had only six missionary couples, but Judson strongly supported the suggestion to send John Taylor Jones and Mrs. Jones to Siam. Judson and his associates were willing to sacrifice two of their small twelve to open the second field for the American Baptist Mission. The Joneses actually studied the Siamese language for six months in Maulmain before going to Siam in 1833.¹¹

Meanwhile Gutzlaff married Miss Newell of the London Missionary Society in Malacca. They returned to Bangkok on February 11, 1830. Plowing into the translation work with amazing concentration and zeal they completed an imperfect Siamese Bible plus large portions in Lao and Cambodian, as well as a dictionary and grammar of Siamese and Cambodian.¹² This grammar greatly assisted the Jones in their work in Siam.

¹⁰Judson, op. cit., p. 310.

¹¹S. F. Smith, "Mission in Siam" in Missionary Sketches: A Concise History of the Work of the American Baptist Missionary Union (Boston: 1887) Reprinted as Appendix VII in G.B. McFarland Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928 (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press Ltd., 1928), p. 345.

¹²Gutzlaff, op. cit., p. 55.

Just a year later on February 16, 1831 Maria Gutzlaff died giving birth to twins, only one of whom survived. Completely broken in health and at the point of death Gutzlaff left Thailand for China on June 3, 1831, having just received news of the death of his little daughter. This amazing man had a particular burden for millions in inland China and labored to that end till his death on August 9, 1851 in Hong Kong. His burden and influence on Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was so profound that Taylor called Gutzlaff "the grandfather of the China Inland Mission."¹³

Pioneer Missions to Siam (1833-1851)

The early Baptist missions in Siam soon developed into two specific departments, the Siamese and the Chinese.

Since February 1831 John Taylor Jones and his wife had served two years in Burma when as assigned they opened the Siamese work of the American Baptists. On their way to Bangkok in 1833 they met David Abeel in Singapore. He requested them to care for the few Chinese worshippers he left in Bangkok until other ABCFM missionaries arrived. Jones also obtained Gutzlaff's Siamese dictionary which Mrs. Jones used to prepare a revised dictionary. Reaching Bangkok on March 25, 1833, Jones managed to rent a small plot at the rear of the Portuguese Consulate, probably with help from the consul, Seignior Carlos de Silveira.¹⁴ Jones' work in Burma among the Talaing tribe (also called

¹³Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor in Early Years (London: C.I.M., 1911), p. 87f.

¹⁴G. B. McFarland, Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828 - 1928 (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press Ltd., 1928), p. 29, 334f.

Peguan or Mon) was a potential opener for many of these Mon people who had spilled over into Siam.¹⁵ However, being officially restricted to Bangkok they focused specifically on the Siamese. They learned the language well. Later Jones was said to be more eloquent in Siamese than in English. Unfortunately this could be said of few missionaries in Thailand today. By September 1833 Jones had completed a Christian tract and a summary of geography and astronomy in Siamese.

Jones' translation and revisions of the Siamese New Testament were major contributions to Siamese evangelization. He supervised two editions by 1851. By December 1839 the Siamese New Testament was completed except for Hebrews and Revelation. In 1840 58,000 copies were distributed. The Baptist Mission Press was set up in 1836 and printed materials for the Presbyterians also, until they got their press in 1861.¹⁶

Although former trail blazers took opportunity to reach the Siamese, their primary objective was the Chinese. This Baptist couple was, however, the first to come specifically for the evangelization of the Siamese people. But even Jones found himself starting Siamese and Chinese departments simultaneously. While he was unable to speak Chinese "he found the Chinese part of the population by far the most accessible and inquisitive."¹⁷ Significantly the Chinese ever since have

¹⁵Winifred G. Hervey, The Story of Baptist Missions in Foreign Lands (St. Louis: C.R. Barns Publishing Company, 1892), p. 461, 462.

¹⁶McFarland, op. cit., p. 29, 347.

¹⁷William Gammell, A History of American Baptist Missions in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1849), p. 189.

been equally accessible.

Jones opened his house to the little meeting of Chinese who had gathered previously during David Abeel's brief ministry. Thus the first Baptist work among the Chinese commenced in Siam in "a very unostentatious way."¹⁸

In 1833, the opening year of Baptist missions, the first baptisms took place, although the exact date is in conflict. Adding to C. Robinson's 1841 sketch of the origin of the first protestant mission in Siam, the editor of the Bangkok Calendar (1866) says Jones immersed three Chinese on December 8, 1833 in the Chao Phya River. Their names were Chek Peng, Chak Chia and Lai Seng. Mrs. G. B. McFarland later wrote that the first baptism of three Chinese (Chek Peng, Chek Seang-Seah, and Boon Tee) was dated September 22, 1833. However, S. F. Smith confirmed the December date for the first baptisms and notes that just a week before on December 1, 1833, the first Baptist Communion in Siam was administered. The only two communicants were Rev. and Mrs. Jones.¹⁹ William Gammell, the Baptist historian, also fixes these two events in December, but says four were baptised including Boon Tee. A couple of years earlier Boon Tee had received the rite by sprinkling under Carl Gutzlaff. Boon Tee led the group and was immediately appointed chief assistant to Jones.²⁰ In 1836, however, Boon Tee fell victim to opium and left his Christian profession.²¹

¹⁸Hervey, op. cit., p. 471.

¹⁹op. cit., p. 28, 342, 345.

²⁰Op. cit., p. 189.

²¹McFarland, op. cit., p. 28.

In 1835 after a strenuous year of language study and translation, Jones visited Singapore to have his Siamese translation of three tracts and Matthew's Gospel printed.²² Here he met William Dean en route to Bangkok. Dean's first wife, Matilda Coman, after surviving a gruelling 176 days' voyage to Singapore, died on March 5, 1835.

While accompanying little George Boardman from Burma out to the ship "Cashmere" in a native rowing boat, Jones and Dean were attacked by pirates. The buccaneers cast Jones into the sea and speared Dean through the wrist with a three pronged fishing spear. These Malay pirates then grabbed the box of letters destined for America which they thought contained treasure, and fled. Dean pulled Jones, almost drowned, into the boat. They both barely survived. After recovering from their wounds they sailed on to Bangkok.²³

Dean was designated to the Chinese, but as China was then a closed country he was sent to Siam to await an opening. Reaching Bangkok on July 18, 1835, he focused all his energy on developing the Baptist work among the Chinese. He was the first foreigner to study the Teo Chiu Chinese dialect. He first preached in this dialect to thirty-four Chinese in August 1835. Within two months the congregation increased to fifty. In December 1835 Dean baptised three Chinese.²⁴ During Mr. Malcom's visit on July 1, 1837 Dean organized the first Protestant church in the East, the first Chinese church in all of Asia.²⁵ It had three

²²Gammell, op. cit., p. 189

²³Hervey, op. cit., p. 461-467; Anderson, op. cit., p. 417.

²⁴Hervey, op. cit., p. 471.

²⁵Arthur T. Pierson, The Crisis of Missions (New York: Baker and Taylor Co., 1886), p. 76.

Chinese and eight missionary charter members. With Dean's going to Hong Kong in 1842 the Baptists constituted two separate missions the following year, the Siam Mission and the China Mission.

Baptist Missionary Reinforcements and Losses

It is difficult to comprehend the drastic effect that missionary mobility played on these early years of Baptist missions. At the risk of monotony I catalogue some of the major personnel movements in less than two decades before 1851. The high infant mortality in missionary families was also alarming, though no details are given here.

In March 1836 Jones went to Singapore again to get fonts of Siamese and Chinese type. There he met new Baptist reinforcements. Robert Davenport, a printer, and Alanson Reed, with their wives, and J.L. Shuck had arrived with a printing press. They all went on to Bangkok arriving July 1, 1836. Alanson Reed died at the age of thirty the following year August 29, 1837, after a brief but intensive literature outreach from his house-boat two miles north of the capital. J.L. Shuck soon transferred to Macao. A commodious printing house was erected for Davenport's ministry with a strong storehouse for paper and print materials. In October 1837 William Dean was forced to take a health trip. At Macao he married Theodosia Ann Barker and brought her to Siam in May 1838. On March 28, 1838, Eliza Grew Jones died of cholera. Then in 1839 Cowdon H. Slafter arrived with his wife for Siamese work with a second printing press. Then Josiah Goddard and his wife came to Bangkok for the Chinese department in October 1840. But on April 7, 1841, C. H. Slafter died of dysentery, aged twenty-nine.²⁶

²⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 346f.

Six months before British power forced opium on China by the iniquitous treaty over the Opium War (1840-1842) Dean's health broke down. In February 1842 he left Siam not to return permanently until 1864. He spent many of these years in China. Around the same time both Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Slafter withdrew from the mission. In 1845 the Davenports' poor health forced them to return to the USA where they resigned. He died three years later. During these early years C.T. Jones also made two trips to the USA for health purposes. Jones' second wife, Judith Leavitt Jones, died at sea on March 21, 1846. In the meantime in 1843 J.H. Chandler and wife transferred from Burma to take up printing work. Erastus N. Jencks also arrived in December 1846 but left the next year. His wife, Caroline Baldwin Jencks, died on the passage home, June 27, 1848. In March 1848 J. Goddard transferred to Shanghai. Returning in 1847 J.T. Jones was accompanied by his third wife, Sarah Sleeper Jones, and Harriet H. Morse. Poor health forced Harriet Morse to return to America in 1855. Samuel Jones Smith, whom Jones had adopted in Burma, followed Jones to Bangkok in 1849 after joining the mission in the USA.²⁷ Then in 1851 the esteemed John Taylor Jones, founder of the Siam Mission, died after eighteen years connection with the ministry in Siam.

What heartbreaking challenges those early missionaries faced. Death and dying, sickness and disease, comings and goings, arrivals and departures all swept over this tiny band of brave souls like the ocean waves crashing against the rocks and eroding the sand. But

²⁷Gammell, op. cit., p. 194-198, 352.

through turmoil and testing these stalwart soldiers of the cross, facing daily the strains of all the alien elements arrayed against them, held on in bold faith. They stood firm in devoted determination. Their travail of soul resulted in the birth of the Church. Rejoicing in tears with joy through pain they beckon the Church today to follow faithfully in their footsteps to fulfil Christ's missionary mandate.

Initial Church Growth

With the disruption of missionary forces, it is surprising that any church growth occurred at all. Of the four Chinese baptized by Jones (1833) and the three by Dean (1835), only three faithful remained in 1837 to form, with eight missionaries, the foundation members of the first Chinese church organized in the East. Today this Chinese Baptist Church is called Maitrichit Church. The cause for this reduction was the enslavement of the Chinese to opium. Unable to stand the temptation, several of those baptized fell away.²⁸ Also within two years three of those first baptized had died. Nevertheless in 1839 six others were added to the Church.²⁹ In 1840 there were nine Chinese members³⁰ and eight missionaries totalling seventeen in membership.³¹ In 1841 another seven Chinese were baptized, though S.F. Smith says one was Siamese. In 1842 two Chinese members, Tang Tui and Koe Bak,

²⁸Harvey Newcomb, A Cyclopedia of Missions (New York: Charles Scribner, 1856), p. 673.

²⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 346-347.

³⁰Gammell, op. cit., p. 192, 196

³¹ABMU Annual Report 1840; William Buell letter April 19, 1842, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

transferred out and went with William Dean to Hong Kong. They became foundation members of the First Baptist Church in Hong Kong, organized on May 28, 1843.³² Thus Siam contributed to the extension of the Church among Chinese elsewhere in East Asia. By 1839 about twenty attended the Chinese worship service, and from thirty to fifty the Siamese. Many were interested but uncommitted.

No large numbers of Chinese entered the Church until the 1860's. According to S. R. House, by 1848 "sixty names had been added at different times" to the Bangkok Church. However, the membership in 1848 was only twenty-three. During that year a Burmese man, as well as the first two Chinese women, wives of Chinese members, were added. But in 1849 two members died of cholera.

Fifteen years of missionary labor passed. In 1848 five Baptist missionaries worked with the Siamese, and four with the Chinese. There was not yet a single Siamese convert.³³ Later a letter in March 1849 spoke of the first Siamese convert. By 1850 the Chinese congregation had increased to thirty-five members, including thirty national Christians.³⁴

While in Siam, Dean preached to the Chinese and spent much time speaking to visitors who came to his floating house on the river. Jones tenaciously translated the Siamese Scriptures, prepared tracts and visited Buddhist temples to propagate the Gospel. He completed the

³²Smith, op. cit., p. 346-347; McFarland, op. cit. p. 30.

³³Gammell, op. cit., p. 194, 349.

³⁴Newcomb, op. cit. p. 676; Smith, op. cit., p. 348.

New Testament in 1844 and started on the Old Testament. In 1839 a chapel was built.³⁵ Evangelism was the heart beat of early Baptist missions and in 1844 an out station was started some miles outside of Bangkok. By 1849 two schools were started for Chinese boys with eighteen pupils.³⁶ The missionary ladies also taught "such pupils as could be induced to attend their instructions." Parents often forbade their children to attend, believing it would diminish their value if and when they were to sell their children as slaves.³⁷ So teaching was another vital ministry especially to the families of Christians. Property was also purchased for service to the aged, poor, and sick members of the Church.

A further evangelistic activity of the missionaries was co-operating with other missions in tours for spreading the Gospel.

Co-operative Missionary Evangelistic Tours

Soon after the Baptists had entered Thailand, missionaries from other societies began arriving. Many were coming to Siam only as a stopping off place or waiting period. They were coiled ready to spring into China when the door was opened. Siam was their training ground.

Between 1834 and 1840 ten couples and a single lady arrived under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission. Among them was Dan Beach Bradley, whose famous thirty-eight year missionary

³⁵Henry C. Vedder, A Short History of Baptist Missions (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1927), p. 165.

³⁶ABMU Annual Report, 1849.

³⁷Newcomb, op. cit., p. 673

career and medical skill left an indelible impression on Siam. Another was Jesse Caswell, who had a profound influence on Prince Mongkut, then in the Buddhist priesthood but who was destined to be the next Siamese king (Rama IV) in 1851. Both Bradley and Caswell withdrew from the ABCFM in 1847 as they embraced sinless perfection doctrine. They joined the American Missionary Association (AMA) and continued ministry to the Siamese. With the transfer of the last of their workers to China in 1849, the ABCFM closed their work in Siam.

In 1840 the American Presbyterians opened their work in Siam. From 1847 onward they remained at the helm, steering their missionary ship determinedly through thick and thin. Key names like Mattoon, House, McGilvary ("the Apostle to the Laos") and McFarland remain as vivid memories in the annals of Thai Church history.

One vital activity of these early missionaries was the cooperative evangelistic trip or tour. When not confined to Bangkok, or when special permission was obtained, they made short tours along canals and rivers to nearby towns.

Many such tours were made over these years. Just two examples will be cited. One of the first recorded missionary tours was September 17-24, 1840, when Cowdon Slaughter (Baptist) and William Buell (Presbyterian) travelled by boat to Ratburi. Another at the end of this beginning era was in November, 1852, when S. J. Smith (Baptist) and Stephen Mattoon (Presbyterian) travelled with their wives on a month long tour of the interior.³⁸ They visited inland towns, former capitals and

³⁸Stephen Mattoon letter, Jan. 28, 1854, Microfilm of "Siam Letters", PCUSA.

Petchburi.

Such touring was seasonal, depending on the water levels in streams and canals. Usually these itineraries were conducted at the end or just after the flood seasons in the latter months of the year.

The purposes of these tours were to explore the regions, gathering geographical data for perspective work, and to distribute much Christian literature. Opportunities were also taken to preach Christ openly.

Several significant observations can be made from the records of these early tours. First, the missionaries were keenly aware of the homogeneous units of population. The different ethnic, linguistic, dialectical differences of the people were noted. Siamese, Chinese (several dialects), Lao, Peguan, Cambodian, Cochin Chinese, Malays, Indians, Portuguese were observed.³⁹

Second, a strange kind of openness and interest pervaded the outlying areas. Most villages and towns were along the rivers and canals. They were "very accessible for benevolent effort." Everywhere were "heathen temples whose lofty spires point to heaven as if in defiance of all of its laws." Yet many priests and villagers desired to receive the literature and to listen to the Gospel.⁴⁰

Third, was the inter-mission co-operation in such evangelistic tours. With small members of missionary staff, the common goal to

³⁹Robert Davenport letter, Nov. 22, 1842, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁰William Buell letter, Dec. 4, 1840, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

evangelize brought the different denomination groups and missions together. In the face of common problems and extreme difficulties they joined as a common front. Thus missionaries of the Presbyterians, Baptists, ABCFM, and AMA often joined in team exploratory evangelistic tours. Truly the ecumenical movement was born on a thousand mission fields.

Two Shattering Disasters (1851)

The Baptist pioneers had a rough sea of political obstinance in which to row under King Pra Nang Klao (Rama III), 1824 - 1851. Like previous Siamese kings he virtually held absolute sway over the opinions and practices of his subjects. His power was awesome. The people literally prostrated themselves on the ground at his feet in symbolic servitude. He was the lord of life and lord of death! He was also conservative, traditional and narrow minded.

King Rama III was not friendly to missions. He was suspicious of foreigners and kept missionaries under strict surveillance. At times he restricted their residence in Bangkok.⁴¹ At first they were not allowed to travel out into the country areas among the people.⁴² Later occasional permission was granted to do so. It was a trying time for these pioneer missionaries. The king's hostility threatened the defeat of mission work in Siam.

The opium wars with China rightly chagrined King Rama III and

⁴¹Mary Backus, Siam and Laos (Philadelphia: Westcott & Thomson, 1884), p. 321.

⁴²William E. Strong, The Story of the American Board (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), p. 115.

to his credit and through the prompting of missionaries he passed the first royal edict against opium in 1839. The same year he rewarded Dr. Bradley for his inoculations.

The king's rude treatment of Sir James Brooke, England's ambassador seeking commercial treaties with Siam, almost produced war with Britain.⁴³ The tension was high. His suspicion and jealousy of the growing influence of the missionaries erupted in positive boycott's against the missionaries.

In 1850 the king threw their Siamese teachers into prison.⁴⁴ Their servants fled. Fearing the king and his ministers, none of the people would rent or sell houses or lands to the missionaries.⁴⁵ Many refused to sell them food. Even the lives of the missionaries were in danger. There seemed no alternative but to withdraw from Siam.⁴⁶ A disastrous conclusion seemed imminent. Asian missionary societies, now forming in such numbers, would do well to send missionaries of as stout hearts. The progress of the Gospel is seldom easy.

Then at the height of this opposition, the king fell seriously ill in January, 1851, the very month of the Baptist fire.⁴⁷ Though no

⁴³Edwin Munsell Bliss, (Ed.), The Encyclopedia of Missions Vol.II (New York: Funk & Wagnells, 1891), p. 335.

⁴⁴S. Mattoon letter, October 8, 1850, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁵S. R. House letter, December 10, 1850, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁶S. Mattoon letter, December 5, 1850, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁷S. Mattoon letter, February 5, 1851, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

serious complications were expected, the king worsened and died on April 3, 1851. Thus the royal opposer of the Gospel was taken out of the way.

In January, 1851, fire razed the Baptist compound. Severe loss was incurred. Buildings, chapel, libraries, school and personal effects were lost. The complete printing plant was ruined. The destruction of the complete second edition of J. T. Jones' Siamese New Testament was a calamity. The cause of the fire was never satisfactorily solved. Possibly it was deliberate arson.⁴⁸ Where the Gospel progresses there will be the demonic roaring lion attempting to frustrate the grace of God.

The second tragedy to strike the Baptists suddenly was the loss of the mainstay of their Siamese work. In September, 1851, after eighteen years of faithful service in Siam, Dr. John Taylor Jones died of dysentery. This was serious, for the Baptists were left without any missionaries fluent in the language to work with the Siamese.

Thus the destruction of the press with the whole compound, and the death of pioneer Jones in the same year, were two heavy blows to the Baptists. They rallied only slowly. But they plodded on through decades of struggling growth.

⁴⁸Kenneth E Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1958), p. 19.

Chapter 4

YEARS OF STRUGGLING GROWTH (1851-1873)

The ascension of King Mongkut Pra Chom Klao (Rama IV 1851-1868) to the Siamese throne brought a more favorable situation for Christian missions. The king's close contact with several missionaries during his years in the Buddhist priesthood solidified his friendly attitude towards missionaries. He was highly educated and liberal, and therefore much more progressive and tolerant than his predecessor. King Rama IV even requested the missionary wives to teach his women in his palace.

A Brief Relapse Amidst Changes Favorable to Missions

While royal favor generally prevailed during his reign, there was a short period (1854-1855) when King Mongkut's ire and displeasure was exhibited towards the American missionaries. This was a trying time especially for Baptists.

In October 1854, an anonymous letter in a Singapore paper unjustly abused the administration and attacked the character of King Mongkut. The king was angry. Jumping to conclusions, he falsely accused the missionaries, with particular focus on the Baptists. The anticipated arrival of Sir John Bowring, English ambassador, postponed the expulsion of a Baptist missionary, an apparent scapegoat.¹

On December 18, 1854, the owners of land rented to the Baptists with government consent were seized and jailed in irons, accused of selling

¹S. Mattoon Letter, Nov. 27, 1854, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

"royal land" to foreigners. They were released four or five days later, being warned not to rent land to missionaries.

On December 24, 1854, a royal decree forbade missionary servants, both Siamese and Chinese, from accompanying missionaries on tours outside the suburb limits. The penalty for doing so was immediate arrest and imprisonment. Thus, King Mongkut's attitude to his missionary friends changed for a season. The national printers employed by AMA fled. Teachers of the Presbyterians were also arrested that afternoon.² The teachers were questioned concerning the infamous letter and released, "after paying to the greedy officers more than three months' wages." The teachers feared to return to mission employ. Missionaries were confined to the city and could not travel "past the custom house."³

This state of affairs continued through March 1855, when the kind and unsolicited intercession of Sir John Bowring resulted in the king's removing the restrictions on the missionaries.⁴ After this a more favorable disposition of the king towards missionaries was reinstated.

King Mongkut concluded treaties with England (1855) and the United States (1856). Revealing no ingrained antagonism to missions, he requested one of the Presbyterian missionaries, Stephen Mattoon, be appointed first U.S. Consul.⁵ At this Dr. Wood of the U. S. Embassy wrote

²S. R. House letter, Dec. 25, 1854, Micro film of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

³S. Mattoon letter, Jan. 22, 1855, Micro film of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴S. R. House letter, July 3, 1855, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁵Edwin Munsell Bliss, The Encyclopedia of Missions Vol.II (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1891), p. 335.

that "the unselfish kindness of the American missionaries, their patience, sincerity, and faithfulness, have won the confidence and esteem of the natives."⁶

A decade of open relationship with the missionaries followed. Then in August 1868 while, accompanying the French Astronomical expedition on the west coast of Siam to view an unusually protracted eclipse of the sun, King Mongkut came down with malaria and typhus fevers. To the sorrow of all he died not long after returning to Bangkok. His son, the famous progressive monarch of Siam, King Chulalongkorn, ascended the throne (1868-1910). He continued and excelled in friendliness towards Christian missions.

Sharing in Palace Women's Work

During the early years of King Rama IV's reign, the door to an unusual opportunity to work with palace women was opened. On August 14, 1851, King Mongkut invited three of the missionary wives to come to the Royal Palace to teach English to his wives and the women of the palace. For three years Mrs. Bradley (AMA), Mrs. Mattoon (Presbyterian), and Mrs. J. T. Jones (Baptist) taught six days a week, alternating two days each. Thus, the Gospel entered the walls of the Siamese palace, behind the huge gates of the women's quarters forbidden to man's entrance. The women's hand, like that of Ann Judson, again brought a first in mission work. This was the first consistent missionary instruction ever given in a palace, and the first women's zenana work ever begun in the East.

While men were excluded from the forbidden city of the King's

⁶Robert E. Speer, Christianity and the Nations (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1910), p. 192.

Royal Harem, Siamese women still enjoyed a high status. Although they were not taught to read like the men, they had nevertheless an important role and status in society, in the home, in commerce, and in specific arts and crafts such as intricate and unique fruit decoration. A. T. Pierson correctly observed their status in this early period: "Though woman is by no means man's equal, even here her condition is vastly superior to that of her sex generally in the East, and here ordinary treatment is affectionate and considerate."⁷

This innovative move of King Mongkut to have the palace women taught to speak, read and write English was a further move to raise the status of Thai women in the eyes of foreign dignitaries, who would come and visit.

It is fitting to pause here to pay tribute to women involved in missionary work. A good thrust for missionary work was powerfully generated through the Women's Missionary Societies, developed out of a compassionate concern for the lost world. Thousands of women in Western churches prayed, raised funds, and sent forth workers, that the Great Commission might be fulfilled. This host of unsung dedicated heroines in the homeland is worthy of praise. And so are those who, counting the cost, severed the comforts of home and went forth to sometimes unbelievable conditions, with their husbands or alone, to proclaim Christ to the nations. The loneliness, suffering and hardship they faced can only be compared with that of the great women who pioneered the frontiers of lands like America and Australia. Today when selfish worldliness and licentious freedom of a new morality permeates our Western societies, a fresh need challenges women

⁷Arthur T. Pierson, The Crisis of Missions (New York: Baker and Taylor Co., 1886), p. 74.

to extol holiness, compassion and determination to lift the moral standards of the world, as the women of those days did. Women's Missionary Societies should be rejuvenated; ladies' prayer bands should be renewed. A host of dedicated women are still needed to join many of their comrades on mission fields around the world. Indeed there are still areas where women alone have entrance to large sections of society for ministry to women, particularly in tribal and Muslim peoples.

The palace ministry in Bangkok continued consistently until December 1852, when the serious illness and death of a young queen caused a cessation of teaching temporarily.⁸ When it was resumed the following year, a decided change in the approach of the missionary women was evident. Part of this came through the interest of the palace women themselves. The Annual Report (Oct. 1, 1853) declared that "the women's teaching in recent months had gradually assumed a more decidedly evangelistic cast." The 1854 Annual Report (Sept. 13, 1854) reads: "Very little has been done in the English language during the year, instruction having been chiefly imparted through the Siamese....Some of those under instruction have read the entire New Testament and most other Christian books in print, and some of them profess to yield a nominal assent to the truth contained in these books."

At the height of this excitement, calamity fell. In October, 1854, the anonymous letter in a Singapore newspaper attacked the character and administration of King Mongkut. This upset him greatly. He reacted against the missionaries. This, with other causes unrelated to this incident, brought a sudden cessation to the palace visits.

⁸S. Mattoon letter, Dec. 1, 1852, Microfilm of "Siam Letters."
PCUSA.

One day the missionary ladies were prevented from visiting the palace women as usual. A few days later Mrs. Mattoon and Mrs. Smith went there and were received as usual. However, a few days after this no one was willing to open the gate for them. It was obvious that the door of the women's work in the palace had been deliberately shut to missionaries, without any explanation.

We can, of course, surmise that with the King's personal unwillingness to accept Christianity, he could hardly have been pleased when his own wives were showing such deep interest. Furthermore, one may question whether it was right for the missionary ladies to neglect the teaching and communication of English for which they were called, in favor of using Siamese to present Christ. In any case, the damage was done and the door was closed in November, 1854.

Significantly in 1862 King Mongkut advertised in Singapore for an English teacher for his palace. Widowed Mrs. A. H. Leonowens accepted the contract as an English teacher for five years. S. Mattoon reported: "She is restricted to teach English alone, and is forbidden to teach anything of the Christian religion." She taught the children and some of their mothers.⁹

The closing of the women's palace work was forced upon the missionaries, but the closure of the Siamese work of the Baptists was a sad episode which lack of personnel occasioned.

Closing the Baptist's Siamese Work - 1868

In 1860 the Baptists decided to organize a separate church for the

⁹S. Mattoon letter, July 17, 1862, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

Siamese. This was accomplished in April, 1861, with fourteen charter members.¹⁰ However, the difficult years which followed ended with the closure of Siamese work in 1868, although the Siamese Church had doubled to twenty-eight members in 1863.

Of a dozen new missionaries who arrived after 1850, only one, L. A. Eaton (1882-1893), remained ten years. Of the rest, seven transferred to China by 1873, one, C. H. Chilcott, died the year after arriving, two returned home within a few days, and another, Mrs. L. A. Eaton, died in 1891 after several years service. Faithful Mrs. Marie Maine Dean also died in 1881 after some twenty years of service.

J. H. Chandler, with his wife, served faithfully as the mission printer (1843 - 1868). Then as Baptists gave up the Siamese work in 1868, Chandler became a "chief foreigner in the Royal Court."¹¹ S. F. Smith writes that Mr. Chandler was "a man of great mechanical genius."¹² He helped to carry out a number of government projected improvements.

S. J. Smith, born in Hindostan and brought to Siam with Dr. Jones, also formed the main stay of the Baptist forces between 1849 and 1868. He labored mostly among the Siamese, but results were meagre. Withdrawing from the Mission in 1868, he and his wife, formerly Mrs. Sarah Sleeper-Jones, continued to look after Baptist interests, although the Baptist

¹⁰B. McFarland, Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1826-1928 (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press Ltd., 1928), p. 32.

¹¹William F. Bainbridge, Along the Lines at the Front (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882), p. 149.

¹²S. F. Smith, "Mission in Siam" in Missionary Sketches: A Concise History of the Work of the American Baptist Missionary Union (Boston: 1887). Reprinted as Appendix VII in McFarland, op. cit., p. 347.

Siamese work formally closed in 1868. The Smiths supported themselves with their printing establishment, carrying on from J. H. Chandler. Mrs. Smith also taught a boarding school of forty-two pupils in 1857, at private charges. The next year the pupils numbered fifty-six. The Bible and religious books were the principal texts.¹³ Not only was the Siamese work closed, but the Chinese work was more or less orphaned a few years later.

Neglecting the Chinese Church

In May, 1863, Robert Telford and family left Siam for China for health reasons, "leaving the Chinese in Siam without a missionary."¹⁴ In late 1864, after twenty-two years in China (1842 - 1864), William Dean returned to Siam for another two decades of ministry to Chinese before retiring to the USA in 1884. Of his fifty years of missionary service, twenty-seven of them were in Siam. In 1865 the Chinese Mission to Bangkok was re-opened.¹⁵ By 1869 Siamese work was given up, and work was confined to the Chinese, though even that was threatened with closure. As late as 1872 the executive committee of the Baptist Union suggested complete withdrawal of the Mission to Siam.¹⁶ Indeed for many years only Dr. and Mrs. Dean remained as Baptist representatives in Siam.

¹³Ibid. p. 349.

¹⁴J. Wilson letter, April 17, 1863, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

¹⁵A.B.M.U. 1865 Annual Report.

¹⁶Bainbridge, op. cit., p. 151; Harlan P. Beach. A Geography and Atlas of Protestant Missions Vol. I. (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1901), p. 313.

Chinese Church Growth (1850-1873)

Despite considerable neglect, the Chinese continued to be the strength of the Baptist Church in Siam. They grew from thirty-five members in 1853, to seventy-eight in 1872, and to 500 by 1883. Membership fluctuated at times. In the decade ending 1863 the Chinese Church had dropped to thirteen members. That year the departure of the Telfords left the Chinese orphaned for over a year. Meanwhile, the Siamese Church, since their separate organization, had doubled in membership (1861 - 1863).¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Chinese soon outgrew the Siamese, reaching fifty-three members by 1867.

In the thirty years since the first Chinese Church was organized (1837), a total of fifty-one Chinese had been baptized in Siam.¹⁸ In 1866 five more had been baptized and in 1867 Dean baptized another forty Chinese. Thus, in just over a year as many Chinese were baptized as had joined the Church in the previous thirty years.¹⁹ Many of these new converts were from the outstations. In 1868 two chapels were built and dedicated, as well as two new churches organized at the outstations.²⁰ The first pastor ordained in the Baptist work was appointed soon after. Dr. Dean also began a revision of the Scriptures.²¹

Two Siamese women, won through Mrs. Dean, were baptized in 1872.

¹⁷Smith, op. cit., p. 349.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 350.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 350; McFarland, op. cit., p. 32; N. A. McDonald letter, Jan. 17, 1868, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

²⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 350.

²¹McFarland, op. cit., p. 32.

By then three Baptist churches had seventy-eight members, although "the lamp burned somewhat dimly." A new spark of life exploded the following year when thirty were baptized. Three or four young men were also under theological instruction as future preachers of the Gospel.²² Thus, the potential for a hopeful work in the coming decade seemed evident. But this must wait for analysis in the next chapter.

The question at hand related to seeking the cause for this sudden Chinese movement after 1867. To understand this more fully, a recapitulation of the situation of the Chinese in Siam is necessary.

Reviewing Chinese Receptivity

In 1856 Harvey Newcomb wrote that of the three to five million inhabitants in Siam, "some hundred thousands are Chinese, and there are many Peguans, Burmese, Shans....." Numerous Chinese from the island of Hainan lived in Bangkok, with an estimated population of 300,000, and kept up constant intercourse with their own country.²³

Chinese influence in Siam already had a long history. Waves of immigration had occurred for centuries. Their political and economic influence grew. The famous General Phraya Taksin, who defeated the Burmese and liberated Ayuthaya, was a Siamo-Chinese. Wealthy Chinese became favorites of the rulers, received titles of nobility and gave their daughters to the Siamese rulers. Mrs. N. A. McDonald, who served in Siam 1860 - 1884, concludes: "Thus we find Chinese blood flowing in veins of

²²Smith, op. cit., p. 351.

²³Harvey Newcomb, A Cyclopedia of Missions (New York: Charles Scribner, 1856), p. 670.

the Royal Family of Siam."²⁴

More closely allied to the period under consideration is the Great Rebellion in Yunnan, China (1855-1874), which caused the death of one million Chinese. The Muslims were wiped out.²⁵ Many Chinese refugees fled into Siam. Famine, poverty and poor economic conditions also caused many in South China to emigrate to Siam. A. F. Groesback aptly described this flow of Chinese. "In years past, Chinese who were able to bear no longer the straits and sufferings of the homeland found an open road to ease and plenty across the seas in Singapore, Siam, the Dutch Indies and the Islands of the Southern Pacific."²⁶

Immigrant Chinese men often left their Chinese wives on the mainland. After a time in Siam, they usually took Thai wives. Thus, again the Siamo-Chinese element among the ethnic Siamese grew, particularly in the population of the capital and its nearby environs.

The Chinese, even in their new land, remained clannish. Natives of each province tended to live and work together in the interest of their own clans. Inter-clan squabbles were common. Riots and revolutions erupted occasionally in Siam.²⁷

However, these immigrations into Siam caused consequent changes among the Chinese, especially in the breakdowns of Chinese "family life

²⁴Mary Backus (Ed.), Siam and Laos (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, Westcott & Thomson, 1884), p.146.

²⁵Ibid. p. 18-19.

²⁶ABFMS Annual Report, 1935, p. 213.

²⁷Backus, op. cit., p. 148-149.

and clan restraints."²⁸ This provided an ingredient making for increased receptivity of the Chinese to the Gospel. They were already open to change. Hence, most of the early and many of the later converts were Chinese. Few Siamese became genuine Christians.

Siamese officials also brought pressure to bear on the Chinese. Jealousy over their advancement, concern for their control of Siam's economy, and reaction to the obvious alien separateness of many Chinese caused Siamese officials to impose restrictions of them.

Consequently, the Chinese sought every opportunity to get protection and relief. In 1867 the American Consul, Mr. Hood, on his own authority, began issuing protection papers to those orientals who would pay the "fee." The Chinese greatly desired such protection papers. "This resulted in a period of Christian popularity" among them; many (incorrectly) thought that being Christian would better facilitate their obtaining protection papers, and that the influence of the missionary would help. Neither, in fact, had any bearing on Consul Hood's project which, when eventually disclosed, caused his speedy withdrawal from Siam.²⁹

Thus, after 1866 a great number of Chinese in this Christian movement in Siam had tainted motives in joining the Church. Nevertheless, despite this weakness, many Chinese came under Christian instruction, and some were truly won to the Lord. Although Dr. Dean had been away from Siam for many years, he also had been dealing with Chinese astuteness and subtle shrewdness for decades in China. But then even an expert could be hoodwinked by desperate, scheming Chinese ex-patriots in Siam at that time.

²⁸ABFMS Annual Report, 1935, p. 213

²⁹McFarland, op. cit., p. 64.

Before concluding this chapter on Baptist missions in Siam (1851-1873), a brief flashback to review the situation in the American homeland is appropriate.

For thirty years through the turmoil of the anti-mission Baptist movement the General Missionary Convention of the Baptists for Foreign Missions stood united. Then in 1845 the Southern Baptists withdrew to form a society of their own, the Southern Convention. The Northern Baptists regrouped adopting a new constitution as the American Baptist Missionary Union.³⁰

This division of the Baptists preceded, by a decade and a half, the American Civil War (1861-1865), during which Dean returned to Siam. This war caused much heartache among the missionary brethren on the fields of all denominations. Naturally it also affected the cause of missions in many ways, diverting the energies and resources of American churches to their immediate temporal conflict, away from the most pressing eternal conflict in the spiritual realm, the salvation of the "heathen."

³⁰Edward Judson, The Life of Adoniram Judson, (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1883), p. 54.

Chapter 5

BAPTIST PERSEVERANCE AND NEGLECT (1874-1950)

With the cessation of the Siamese work and the orphaning of the Chinese Church, the Baptist churches in Siam embarked upon the rough seas of virtually standing on their own. Great perseverance was shown. Despite many weaknesses in the church, the faith had been planted deeply. In spite of the lack of missionary reinforcements to encourage them, the tiny Chinese Church refused to flounder. The light kept burning, though rather dimly at times, during the next six decades.

Minimal Missionary Involvement

The Baptists had four means by which some contact with the church in Siam was maintained in the decades that followed. With the exodus of the Chinese missionaries to China by 1873, only Dean and his wife were left. Alone he carried on till 1884, when his health also degenerated. Mr. L. A. Eaton came to relieve in 1882 and stayed through 1893. His wife had died in 1891, leaving him the sole survivor of the Baptist Mission in Siam.

But apart from the lonely sentinels the Baptist Mission virtually left the potential movement of the Chinese orphaned and sadly neglected. Sad it was, because all along until present times the Chinese in Siam have been one of the most receptive populations for church growth. But little concerted effort has been given to them. Many leading church men in the Thai church today are of Chinese, not Siamese, extraction. This is most significant.

In 1893 Eaton was acting U.S.Consul. The end of Baptist work again loomed on the horizon. The Baptist compound was sold, as well as the old burial grounds of the missions which was near the Portuguese Consulate. The remains of those buried were transferred to the Protestant Cemetery given by King Mongkut to the foreign Protestant community in 1853. When Eaton left in 1893 he placed the Baptist work in the care of Dr. H. Adamsen, who was born in Siam. S. J. Smith had sent him to the U.S.A. where he studied medicine. He returned to Bangkok where he established a successful medical practice.¹

When the Baptists closed their Siamese work in 1868, S. J. Smith and his wife, the former Mrs. Sarah Jones, resigned from the mission, but remained in Siam supporting themselves by printing and boarding schools. In this way the Baptist Mission had some unofficial help as a second means of contact during this neglected period. Mrs. Sarah Smith died in 1889 and Samuel Smith in 1909. Mrs. Dean also spoke some Siamese and thus was able to help a little, but failing health forced her to return to the U.S.A. in 1881 where she died Jan. 16, 1883.

A third way of Baptist strategy during this period was input by remote control from China. After a few years Dr. Adamsen was so absorbed in his own work that he arranged for the South China Baptist Mission to take charge, hopefully sending a representative for annual visits.² In 1909-1910 Dr. John M. Foster spent about six months in Bangkok helping and consulting with the Chinese brethren. Part of this was due to the concern for Chinese Christians who had moved down from China to Bangkok, rather than purely for

¹G. B. McFarland, Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928 (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928), p. 33.

²Ibid., p.34.

the local Christians there.³ The ideal short annual visits did not always materialize and the 1909-1910 prolonged visit was unusual.

Fourthly, there were the occasional missionary trips from Burma to the Karen or Mon, but these did not relate to formal missions in Siam. The overall picture of Baptist missionary involvement was indeed dismal. The remainder of the Baptist mission property, except the small piece of land on which the Chinese Church chapel stood, was sold in 1927. The Baptists mission work was finally given up completely.⁴ But God kept His Church alive.

In 1929 the Swatow National Church in South China, the Ling Tong Baptist Convention, took over responsibility for the Bangkok work. They sent Rev. Kiok Meng to be pastor at the Maitrichit Baptist Church, which moved to its new location in 1935.⁵

Chinese Movement and Decline (1874-1910)

The wave of Chinese migration from the mainland continued. Amongst these people was a potential for ingathering, but Dean, alone and aging was not able to cope with the evangelization and instruction required in this.

In 1874 the year after all transfers to China were made, and Dean was alone, large additions were gained in Bangkok and the out stations: 11 baptisms in one, 17 in another, 25 in a third, and 84 in a fourth. The following year, 1875, another 90 were baptized, making the whole number 317 mem-

³ABMU 96th Annual Report, 1910, p. 101.

⁴McFarland, op. cit., p. 34.

⁵Russell E. Brown, Doing the Gospel in Southeast Asia (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1968), p. 56.

bers.⁶ In 1877 there were six churches with 418 members. Sixty-one had been baptized during that year, twenty-four of them from one of the cut stations which had eighty communicants. They also had seven chapels, two ordained and six unordained preachers, and five cut stations.⁷ By 1883 five churches had a membership of 500, but this was recognized as "probably far too high an estimate."⁸

With no reinforcements for many years, and surrounded by "nearly three million Chinese, "Dean faced an awesome task amidst a potentially receptive people. In 1882 William Bainbridge suggested a few Presbyterian stations among the Siamese of Siam might "quickly arouse American Baptists to retrieve their disgraceful negligence here for the last eight years."⁹

Significantly, Presbyterian pioneer Daniel McGilvary had opened Chiangmai in 1867. After the initial struggle and the martyrdom of the first two Lao converts (1869), McGilvary was at the point of a breakthrough when Bainbridge penned his challenge to the Baptists. In 1884 McGilvary had 152 baptized members in Chiangmai. The Baptists had no missionaries left in Siam by 1894. But by then the Presbyterians had eleven churches in the North alone, with 1,841 members. By 1914 the spreading movement of the Holy Spirit through this energetic missionary and his associates caused the Church to swell to 6,934 members in twenty-six churches. All this at a time when

⁶Henry C. Vedder, A Short History of Baptist Missions (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1927), p. 165; S. F. Smith, Missionary Sketches: A Concise History of the Work of the American Baptist Missionary Union (Boston: 1887), Reprinted in McFarland, Appendix VII, p. 351.

⁷Smith, Ibid., pp. 351-352.

⁸Ibid., p. 353.

⁹William F. Bainbridge, Along the Lines at the Front (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882), p. 149.

the Baptist's work languished through lack of personnel and vision.

Bainbridge's insight and subtle challenge to the Baptists was on target, but it did not, however, receive any response. Today as then are voices in the wilderness calling and pointing the way to mission. Many men of Macedonia are crying out for help. The Church at large is slumbering in self satisfaction, or pre-occupied with material pursuits. She still fails in large measure to rise, go and proclaim the saving Gospel of Christ to the unreached multitudes, many of whom are potentially receptive.

A more detailed look at this Chinese situation and their receptivity is crucial. Following his visit in 1882, W.M.Bainbridge wrote, "Chinese are rapidly overtaking the Siamese in population, numbering already in the capital two-thirds of the half million, and throughout the country almost half of the total eight million."¹⁰ While this may be somewhat overstated statistically, the impact of the masses of Chinese entering Siam was obvious. Accurate population statistics were difficult to obtain, "owing to the native custom of numbering only the males."¹¹ Nevertheless, as Strong affirms, a large proportion of Bangkok's population was Chinese.¹²

Bainbridge reflected as he observed the streets of Bangkok: "It seemed as if I was in a real Chinese city - the crowded Chinese cemeteries in Siam, the frequent inter-marriage, and the immense accumulation of real estate and permanent business interest, proved unquestionably that the Chinese have come to Siam to stay. The vast majority are bonafide immigrants..."

¹⁰Ibid., p. 147.

¹¹Arthur T. Pierson, The Miracles of Mission (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1891), p. 62.

¹²William E. Strong, The Story of the American Board (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), p. 115.

The First King has now a Chinese woman as one of his wives, and her lately deceased son was the legal heir."¹³

G. Winfred Hervey also provided valuable data on the Chinese situation and Church at this time. Between 1882 and 1884 the robbing and rioting of a secret organization among Chinese labourers called the "Red-Letter Society," greatly hindered mission work in Bangkok. The Roman Catholics took advantage of this to persecute and oppress the Protestants. The effects of this two-pronged barrage, along with other causes, resulted in a revised assessment of the Chinese Church membership. The 1884 statistics show only 100 members, which Hervey claims was based on a revision and correction of the church records. This "decline in numbers may be partly owing to the power of the mobocracy in Bangkok."¹⁴

The uncertain "maybe" indicates that other factors such as clearing the debris from padded church rolls also resulted in a more accurate picture. Another factor was "the floating character of the Chinese."¹⁵ Then Chinese mobility back and forth between Siam and China also included Christians and affected the Church. Furthermore, Bainbridge warns that under governmental favour greater caution needed to be taken, so that conversions be genuine especially as kings and officials turned from persecuting to patronizing and tolerating. Therefore, he writes, "It is quite possible that some of these shrewd Chinese have slipped into our churches, because it was so evident that Dr. Dean was in high favour at court, and that Mr. Chandler could get

¹³Bainbridge, op. cit., pp. 147-148.

¹⁴G. Winifred Hervey, The Story of Baptist Missions in Foreign Lands (St. Louis: C.R. Barns Publishing Co., 1892), pp. 923-924.

¹⁵Edmund F. Merriam, A History of American Baptist Missions (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publications Society, 1913), p. 155.

whatever he asked from the kings, and that Mr. Smith did the government printing."¹⁶

Bainbridge added that this also occurs in American churches. Indeed it is a common problem to churches everywhere. Discerning true motives is always difficult. Nevertheless, his careful examination in Siam convinced him that such caution had been taken in "the few past years of large ingathering," as far as one aged missionary could handle. He was "more favourably impressed" with the Chinese Christians of Bangkok than those of elsewhere. Some Chinese Christians exhibited vibrant living faith. The Christians had also built an old men's home with their own money, to shelter their aged poor.¹⁷ It was evident, however, that many entered the church with inadequate motives. After 1884 the Chinese Church declined rapidly until only thirteen members were left in 1889.

A. J. Brown reported that two Chinese Churches remained in Siam by 1907. The church at Watkok had seventy members and was strategically located in the midst of an area of Bangkok which was heavily populated with immigrants from Swatow.¹⁸ That year fires destroyed everything in the Watkok area.

In 1909 Dr. John M. Foster spent six months in Bangkok meeting and counselling the Christians and evangelizing the Chinese in Bangkok. He encouraged them in rebuilding the chapel destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1907. The Chinese that year had given subscriptions towards it. Four had been baptized. By then an increasing number of Chinese women came with their husbands from China and had begun to attend services. The new chapel was

¹⁶Bainbridge, op. cit., p. 150.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁸Zwemer, Samuel M. and Arthur Judson Brown, The Nearer and Farther East (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908), p. 185.

opened October 31, 1909.¹⁹

In 1912 the China Baptist Publication Society at Canton gave ten dollars Mexican monthly towards the support of a Bible colporteur in Bangkok.²⁰ This was timely as revolutionary propaganda and the spread of popular Huxley-Spencer-Darwin atheistic evolution was already prominent among Chinese. This had infiltrated much Chinese thought and teaching, and was infecting the younger members of the Church.²¹

The group at Watkok and the brethren at Petruí, which had been developed earlier, were becoming more organized. The Chinese pastor visited Petruí regularly each month. It was hoped a well trained Chinese pastor would come from China that coming year.

The Chinese mobility continued. "So many of the South China Baptist members were coming and going that the need to minister to them in Bangkok was a growing concern."²² By 1915 a marked increase of Chinese women coming to Siam from China was noted.²³

During the beginning of the 1910 decade much Chinese revolutionary agitation, especially in Bangkok, had caused considerable friction with the Thai rulers and officials. But by 1913 the Chinese clique that had stirred up much of this trouble had been broken up.

¹⁹ABMU 93rd Annual Report, 1907, p. 131.
ABMU 96th Annual Report, 1910, p. 101.

²⁰ABMU 98th Annual Report, 1912, p. 98.

²¹Ibid., p. 102.

²²Ibid.

²³ABMU 101st Annual Report, 1915.

Unfortunately this trouble had affected the open evangelization of the Chinese. For the previous three years all public propagation including Christian street preaching had been forbidden. Government officials feared that allowing open public speaking on thoroughfares and public squares would open wide the door to agitators' promulgating revolutionary doctrines.²⁴

After about 1914 a stronger emphasis in the Chinese work was apparent. Schools and education became more prominent. In 1914 the Chinese pastor's wife opened a primary school for girls. This was aimed to meet the growing need of daughters of the increased influx of Chinese wives.²⁵ Schools for Chinese boys also flourished.

In 1934 Mrs. Groesbeck, wife of the missionary pastor who was there at least from 1932 to 1935, was teaching in the Chinese school. During this year three of the Chaoyang boys opened a school in Swatow when "200 pupils in a body returned to their homeland from Bangkok."²⁶ Such mobility was not conducive to strong growth.

A young peoples society had been organized in 1932, but did not function well until the following year. A good number of the members were teachers who desired to start some education work.²⁷ The emphasis on education and paid employment for Christian teachers in these schools began to mushroom.

During A. F. Groesbeck's time in Bangkok a fairly good number of baptisms took place. Among them was a fair proportion of teachers and

²⁴ABMU 99th Annual Report, 1913, p. 96.

²⁵ABMU 101st Annual Report, 1915, p. 101.

²⁶ABMU 120 Annual Report, 1934,

²⁷Ibid.

pupils from the schools. In 1932 four of the men baptized were teachers. Another teacher and his wife were soon to be baptized at the upcoming communion service.²⁸ In 1933 six of the sixteen baptized at the Central Church were young men of high school grades.²⁹

Groesbeck also dedicated twenty-four babies at Christmas, 1932. This may have been the first dedication service, but certainly it showed the increase of Chinese families coming into Siam. Groesbeck comments, "In a land where children are loved and wanted, our failure in the past to make any recognition of this fact certainly left much to be desired!"³⁰

In 1931 the Hua Kun Chao Church had been organized in Chanburi.

This was an encouraging extension in the midst of little aggressive evangelization of the vast unchurched Chinese in Siam. That students and teachers under Christian employment at the schools joined the church is cause for rejoicing. But inadequate outreach to the receptive Chinese population at large was shameful.

Baptist Karen Work

Ko Tha Byu was the first Karen convert in Burma. He had been a murderer and robber with an uncontrollable temper when Judson rescued him from slavery. Judson paid his small debt to Shway-bay, a Burmese Christian who had earlier redeemed Ko Tha Byu from the slave market and taken him on as his servant. Slowly Adoniram Judson made an impression on Ko Tha Byu. Working for Judson, he learned to read the Burmese New Testament. Soon his whole personality was transformed. He became a Christian within a year

²⁸ABMU 119th Annual Report, 1933, p. 98.

²⁹ABMU 120th Annual Report, 1934.

³⁰ABMU 119th Annual Report, 1933, p. 98.

and was baptized in 1825 by Boardman.³¹ He had moved with the Boardmans from Moulmain to Tavoy that year.

Ko Tha Byu became the Karen Apostle traveling far and wide preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Before April, 1830, he attempted a trip into Central Thailand, but was not permitted to enter. His companion, Maung Sekkee entered successfully "preached and found some that listened."³²

According to Van Benschoten Rev. Carpenter's book "Self Support" in Bassein declares a mission to the Karens of Zimmay (Chiangmai) in Northern Siam was in progress in 1863. "Sahdone and three companions, all recent pupils of Dr. Binney, left Bassein for that distant region, after appropriate farewell services in the school chapel on the 30th of January. They went via Maulmain, with a company of traders, but found the difficulties and dangers of the way so great that they stopped short of their destination and returned."³³ This spirit of outreach was remarkable as the active mission work centered in Bassein was only ten years old. Beginning with this attempt the Karen Mission turned towards North Thailand and Karen church planting.

Naturally the Baptists were concerned with Karen people. As early as 1850 D. L. Brayton and Norman Harris crossed the border from Burma, trying to reach the Siamese Karen. In 1872 C. H. Carpenter with his wife journeyed overland from Bassein through Moulmein to Bangkok, visiting Karen in Central Siam on the way. He found both Pwo and Sgaw Karen. Carpenter writes, "Since

³¹Courtney Anderson, To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1956), p. 386.

³²A. Q. Van Benschoten, Jr., "A Thailand Missionary," printed letter, Chiangmai, January, 1954, p.1.

³³Ibid. (quotes Carpenter pp. 308-309).

the days of Boardman, the locale, numbers, and disposition of the Karens in Siam toward the Gospel have been subjects of frequent and deep interest to the Christian Karens and their missionaries in Burma." Carpenter offered himself for a work in Siam in 1866. The Executive Committee of the Burma Mission "favored the plan, but did not deem it practicable at that time." Prior to 1873 "the elder Vinton went on two trips toward Raheng and Zimmay, north of Siam proper." The Vintons were missionaries in Moulmein.³⁴

The Burma Baptist Convention meeting in December 1880 decided to send three evangelists to the Karens in Thailand. These were Maw Klo, Shwe Mya, and Saw Kay, all from Bassein. A consecration service was held on the Sunday following the convention meeting. These workers returned to Burma in late 1881.

Karen Christians who were teak lumber dealers visited Lakon (or Lampang) in North Thailand. They won "the first considerable number of converts among the Karen in Siam." Returning home they inspired the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention to reach the Karen there. In 1881 the Karen Mission to Siam was revived. Four native Karen preachers were sent. They were "picked tried men in their own work before being entrusted with the work of a foreign missionary."³⁵ McGilvary himself had "tried to gain a footing among the Karens" but using Siamese and Lao language he had "little success."³⁶

In 1881, at the request of the Burma Baptist Convention, Rev. Webster went and surveyed the work in North Thailand. On that trip he baptized

³⁴Ibid., quoting Baptist Missionary Magazine, Jan., 1873.

³⁵D. McGilvary Letter, Feb. 11, 1881, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

³⁶Ibid.

seventy persons and organized three churches. Writing from Thailand he said, "The people here live about five days journey from town and they have carried on their own work for about three years, with a total church membership of about 160. There are two churches and two schools, and those with some education are traveling and preaching."³⁷

In 1882 Rev. Bushell and Rev. Webster of the Burma Baptist Mission visited with some Karen pastors, but no one stayed to work. Then about 1884 Rev. Webster and his wife made a trip to North Thailand. Part of the two years they spent in Thailand they lived in Chiangmai.³⁸

In 1882 Webster and Bushell visited the Karen work in Lakon (Lampang) where "some fifty Karen were reported as wanting to receive baptism. They expected to station six or seven Karen preachers among Lakaun Karen."³⁹

In March 1884 Mr. and Mrs. Webster came to Chiangmai to go to the Karen in Lakaun. The Canadian Baptists later selected the Karen in Siam as their first field. Mr. Churchill and his wife spent a year in Bangkok in effort to reach the Karen. N. F. Armstrong, Mr. Sanford, Miss Nevius, and Miss Armstrong all attempted to reach them from Moulmein and Tavoy. However, "the number that they were able to find did not encourage them in their efforts to teach these people." The Canadian Mission was withdrawn.⁴⁰

David Webster resided in Chiangmai for over a year. On three subsequent occasions, two male foreign missionaries visited these Karen. Three Baptist churches were founded in Lakon (Lampang). They remained under the

³⁷Van Benschoten, op cit., p. 2.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Letter January 10, 1882, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁰Merriam, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

care of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention.⁴¹ By 1885 three Karen churches in North Siam had 151 Karen members.⁴² No updated Siamese Karen statistics were reported in the ABMU annual reports until 1954. By then there were twenty churches with eight hundred members, mostly among the Sgaw Karen, though "some few were Pwo Karen."⁴³

In 1884 a Karen pastor returning to Burma took back with him some of the Thailand Karens to go to school. One of these, Thra Myai Gaw, graduated from the Karen Seminary in 1888 and returned to be pastor at the Banawik Church. Thra Mya San from the Bassein Pwo Karen Mission went over with Thra Myai Gaw and worked until 1890 when he returned to Burma to get his wife. He and his wife and three Chiangmai Christians were killed by robbers as they returned to Chiangmai.⁴⁴ This was a great loss to Karen work in Siam.

By 1900 most of the Burma Karen workers had returned to Burma. In 1907 the Thailand Karens met in conference at Mekwa and sent an appeal to the Burma Baptist Christians in Thailand. In 1909 the Convention sent Thra Eh May Dee Wah to take charge of the work in the Chiangmai area. He served as pastor and school teacher at Mekwa for two years. Then he moved to Chiangmai and opened a school which he served for twenty-three years. Two new churches were organized during this period. The Karen Baptist Convention sent a group of pastors to survey the Thailand work in 1914 and again in 1929. Another group came in 1932 to help celebrate the Jubilee at Chiangmai. In April, 1932, Thra Eh May returned to Burma. Shortly afterward the work at Chiangmai (city) went to pieces.⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²ABMU Annual Report, 1885.

⁴³ABMU Annual Report, 1954, p. 8.

⁴⁴Van Benschoten, op. cit., p. 2. ⁴⁵Ibid.

At the Convention held in Henzada, Burma, in 1932, the Karen Baptist Convention decided to send a preacher to Thailand. They appointed Thra Po Tun who arrived at Chiangmai in January, 1933. He returned to Burma after two years. During his time three churches were organized. One of these in 1954 was a church of 123 members. It is the Musikee Church. Near it is another church of like size. This is west of Chiangmai three days of fast walking. In 1933 the Bassein Karen Women's Society sent Thra Po Shite to North Thailand. He laboured on until his death at Chiengrai in August, 1951. The Depression, a rebellion in Burma, and political changes in Thailand slowed up the Karen mission work in Thailand until World War II abruptly arrested it.⁴⁶ In 1942 there were 575 members.

Mon and Shan Baptist Work

In 1870 Dr. Cushing of the Baptist Mission to Burma visited the Shan in Northern Siam.⁴⁷ However, there seemed to be little follow-up contact with the Shan work there.

With the Mon it was slightly more encouraging. Robbers captured a Talaing (or Mon) girl, and carried her to Siam. She later escaped and returned to Burma. In 1896 this woman and her husband came as missionaries to the Mons in Siam. Edward O. Stevens had sent them. In 1897 Stevens visited Bangkok and baptized five Mons. A church of twenty-five or thirty Mons was organized at Ta Pow Lom (or Sampowlern in Ayuthaya district).⁴⁸ The Mon work seemed most promising, but apparently the Baptists never expanded it. I know today of one young keen church leader less than an hour

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Dr. D. McGilvary letter, March 10, 1870, Microfilm of "Siam Letters," PCUSA.

⁴⁸ Merriam, op. cit., p. 157.

away from Ayuthaya, named Boonma. His mother was Mon, but not Christian. He became a Christian through leprosy work.

Dr. Adamsen at first carried on a vigorous evangelistic program for the Mons. On 1896 twenty-four of the seventy persons baptized were Mon. Of the balance forty-three were Chinese and three were Siamese. In 1897 two new chapels were completed.⁴⁹

The vacillating attempts of the Baptists to establish missions among the Siamese, Karen, Mon and even Chinese, point to Siam as the orphan mission of the Baptists. While retaining for decades a valuable property in Bangkok, no strong force with a serious consolidated effort was established in any of these missions. As late as 1909 the local property and interest of the Baptist work was left under the private control of S. J. Smith. Baptist churches, especially outside of Bangkok, were sadly neglected. The out stations had to fend for themselves.

Political Pressures

In 1886 the fall of the Burmese Kingdom brought her annexation to Britain. During the 1890's the Shan in Burma, Southern China and North Thailand were discontented and turbulent. Local wars erupted and raids on several large Lao villages were made taking off Lao hostages in the North.⁵⁰

While the British encroached on some territory from the west, the French made major inroads into Thai territory from the east. In 1884-1885 France occupied the Siamese land east of the Mekong River. This divided the Laos into two states, one in Siam and the other in modern day Laos.

⁴⁹McFarland, op. cit., pp. 33,34; Zwemer, op. cit., p. 185.

⁵⁰Irwin, Missionary Review of the World, 1897, p. 331.

Further aggravation came between 1893 and 1896 when the French seized more Siamese territory west of the Mekong. Siam's territory was reduced from 500,000 to 300,000 square miles.⁵¹ French war ships even threatened boycott and attack on Bangkok, but this French expansionism was arrested in 1896 when France and Britain signed a treaty guaranteeing the independence of the remaining Siamese territory. This made Siam a buffer state, a sort of demilitarized zone between these two European nations.

Ironically this French "enslavement" of Siamese territory followed shortly after King Chulalongkorn's Edict of Toleration in 1878 which legally granted religious freedom in Siam. It should be noted that the French did not allow such freedom for Protestant propagation, as McGilvary and others soon found out.

Ecumenical Factors

After the coup d'etat of June 1932 overthrew Siam's absolute monarchy, there was a growing desire, especially among the American Presbyterians, to establish a national church. In April, 1934, the Church of Christ in Siam held its first general assembly.⁵² Most of the Christians in Siam were represented in this merger of Presbyterians, British Churches of Christ, and the small Chinese Baptist churches. About 560 Karen Baptists in the North remained separate, their attachment being more to the Burmese Karen Convention with whom they had held close association over the previous five decades. Also remaining independent of this largely Presbyterian Church were the Christian Brethren, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the English Anglican "Christ Church" and the Seventh Day Adventists. The CMA

⁵¹Missionary Review of the World, 1896, p. 397.

⁵²International Review of Missions (Geneva, W.C.C., 1935), pp. 28, 29.

had only seventy-five Christians by 1941. The SDA's had 153 in 1936. Since the American Baptist Mission had long since left Siam they were not represented, though Mr. and Mrs. Groesbeck from the China Mission were in Bangkok around that time.

The Chinese Baptist churches were, however, included. Initially they joined other Chinese in forming the seventh district of the Church of Christ in Thailand, which was ethnically oriented to Chinese rather than geographically related as the other districts were. The main Baptist church was the Teochiu (Swatow) speaking Maitrichit Church. This was the church first founded by William Dean in 1837. In 1910 it had eighty-eight members, and during 1932-1933 about twenty had been added by baptism. There were also some small extension groups of this central church.

John Sung's Revival and Baptist Churches (1938-1939)

Noted Chinese evangelist, John Sung, visited Thailand in 1938 and again in 1939. He came not by C.C.T. official sponsorship, but by private initiation from a leading Thai pastor in the C.C.T. Some missionaries in Bangkok strongly opposed his coming. But without question Sung's coming was providential and strategic, though few realized it until the Second World War swept through Asia.

The Chinese Christians received the most blessing, though some Thai churches were also stirred. The Spirit of God moved through John Sung's powerful though unorthodox ministry. Entire congregations were effected. Sins were confessed. Christians wept in repentance. Nominal members were converted. A quickening of basic spiritual activities of prayer, Bible study and witness swept across the Church.⁵³ The Chinese Baptist churches

⁵³Missionary Review of the World, 1939, pp. 341, 342.

were revived and Chinese pastors and elders in Siamese churches quickened.

This revival was timely. The conversion of leaders and laymen from their nominality was welcome. The spiritual quickening of Christians with status quo ease renewed the bulwarks of faith to face the coming trial of the nationalistic Buddhist movement (1940-1941) and the Japanese War (1942-1945). During the war the churches were scattered. Some Chinese pastors were persecuted and arrested. Many Chinese returned to their homeland. But unquestionably the revival under John Sung helped many Chinese Christians to stand through the Japanese domination.⁵⁴

During the war years a great drop in the Thai church membership occurred. John L. Eakin's evaluation suggested the Siamese Church regressed, but that the Chinese churches, especially in Bangkok, moved forward.⁵⁵ This included both Baptist and Presbyterian Chinese churches. Several reasons for this Chinese stability can be suggested. First was the spiritual force of John Sung's revival. Then the earnestness of the Chinese leadership contributed to equilibrium. Furthermore, the ability of the Chinese to make more money during the war helped support their church leadership. Chinese congregations outside the capital did not fare so well.

As the darkness is blackest before the dawn, so the period of Baptist perseverance and neglect closed somewhat dismally, but encouragement in the post war years was just around the corner of time.

⁵⁴Carl E. Blanford, Chinese Churches in Thailand (Bangkok: Suriyaban Publishers, 1975), p. 34.

⁵⁵International Review of Missions, 1948, p. 75.

Chapter 6

NEW BAPTIST THRUSTS (1949 - 1980)

The post war era saw a marked increase in missions to Thailand. This formed a two-pronged advance in both the ecumenical associations with the C.C.T. (Church of Christ in Thailand) and in the independent evangelical missionary societies. One of the key factors in this development was the closing of the door to China around 1950, and the post war missionary interest which stirred in the West after the holocaust of horrible carnage of the second World War.

American Baptist Re-Entry

Though the Baptists were one of the first pioneer missions to Siam, decades of neglect preceded their re-entry in 1952. As a separate mission to Siam the American Baptist Mission ceased to function by 1893. The Siamese Mission had been closed in 1869, and only Dean remained to hold the Chinese Mission together. When he left in 1884 L. A. Eaton carried on until 1893.

In 1950 H. Q. Van Benschoten Jr. and his wife came to Thailand, because they could not enter Burma to do Karen work at that time. The Karen there were also unable to send workers to Thailand. The Van Benschotens came in connection with the American Baptist Burma Mission in relation to the Karen Convention in Burma. They worked among the Karen in North Thailand.

It was not until the Fall of 1951 that the American Baptist Foreign

Mission Society considered re-entering Thailand and reconstituting a Thailand Mission separate from its Burma Mission.

After the final decision to go ahead in 1952, the Carl Capen family came to Bangkok in October 1952 to head up the mission and to work with the Chinese. They had been in Swatow already, and so the linguistic transition was easy. In February 1953 a survey team of the Board visited Thailand. In September 1953 the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society adopted a program for both Karen and Chinese ministries in Thailand.¹

In 1953 Carl Capen joined the C.C.T. joint advisory council, bringing the American Baptists missionaries into association with the C.C.T. This was wholly true of the Chinese work. But the Karen Baptist ministries remained independent of C.C.T. as the Karen's ties were strongly related to and influenced by the Burmese Karen leadership.

Two decades later the Australian Baptist Missionary Society decided to send missionaries to Thailand. When they entered in 1975 they teamed up with the American Baptists. So did the Swedish Baptists, who came the following year. Both worked with tribal peoples. With this new international flavor the name of the Thailand Baptist Mission was changed to Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship (TBMF).

In 1979 the agencies of Baptist workers associated with the TBMF were as follows: (1) American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, (2) Australian Baptists Missionary Society, (3) Baptist Union of Sweden, and (4) German Baptist Mission (DMG).

The growth of the TBMF work will be outlined later. With the increase of Baptist activity in post war years, it is not feasible to give

¹A. Q. Van Benschoten, Jr., "A Thailand Missionary," printed letter, Chiangmai, January, 1954, p. 3.

a detailed account of all developments. Therefore, summaries of the main emphases will have to suffice. Before the American Baptists returned, another Baptist Mission entered Thailand.

Southern Baptist Mission

The first Baptist mission to enter Thailand following World War II was the Southern Baptists from the USA. Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Galloway came in 1949. They were warmly welcomed and assisted by members of Maitri-Chit Chinese Baptist Church.

The first thirteen Southern Baptists to Siam came as displaced missionaries from China (1949-1952). They were therefore able to start work immediately among Chinese in Bangkok using Chinese dialects they already knew. They also studied Thai in order to reach the Thai. New missionaries were specifically assigned to Thailand first in 1952. Thereafter regular additions were made.

From the start the Southern Baptists were committed to the goal of planting churches. Evangelistic work began in Bean Curd Alley off Wild Tiger Street in the Chinese section of Bangkok. This eventually developed into the Antioch Church, established in the 1960's.

By September 1951 the first church, called Bangkok Baptist Church, was organized among Chinese and India Baptists along with American missionaries. This church initially met along Dinso Road where the Thailand Baptist Seminary was started in October 1952. Later this church changed its name to Grace Baptist Church and moved to a new location on Sukhumvit Soi 19.

In 1953 the Thai-English department of this church moved from Dinso Road and was organized as Immanuel Baptist Church, near the National Stadium on Rama I Road. A student center was started the same year nearby.

Continuing the pattern or strategy of dividing the church along language lines, the English speaking members moved out of Immanuel and in time established Calvary Baptist Church in 1958.

In the meantime in 1953, a literature production department was organized and a Baptist book store opened. Thus Christian Education also became an early concern of the Southern Baptists.

A new chapel was established in 1954 at Song Wad Road, and the New Hope Baptist Church was quickly organized there among Chinese believers. Later this church was moved close to Suriwongse Road.

The Southern Baptists had a vision to reach out beyond the capital. Provinces close by were also occupied. The first was Ayuthaya in 1952. Fifteen years passed before the Church was organized there. Chonburi was opened in 1954 and a church established there in 1959.

In 1956 Paknam was entered. Further expansion in 1959 opened up Prachinburi, Nakorn Nayok and Songkhla. Haadyai and Chachoengsao followed in 1960. In this last place an independent church established in 1930 and formerly associated with the C.C.T. joined the Baptists.

After a decade of speedy expansion (1949-1959) a decade of consolidation ensued. Sriracha was opened in 1961, but later the work was closed. Other stations expanded to Bangkhla (1963), Rayong (1968) and Pattalung (1968).

Earlier in October 1959 the Southern Baptists took over a leprosy clinic in Chonburi, which had been started by Robert Wulff,² Boon Khrong Pitakanon, and Mo Sin, a local doctor. A hospital in Bangkhla was also opened in March 1964.

Seeing the need for intensive Christian training and spiritual renewal, the Southern Baptists purchased an encampment site in 1958 beyond

²Robert M. Wulff, Village of the Outcasts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967).

Pattaya in Chonburi. This has become a significant contribution to camps and seminars, as well as workshops for all Christian groups in Thailand.

During this decade of the sixties seven more churches were organized: Antioch, Bangkhla, Bang Pee Noi, Paknam, Prakhanong, Peace and Songkhla. Chapels were also built at Bangna, Bangsue, Sampong and Saphansam.

The Southern Baptists also forged ahead in Christian mass media. Bible films were dubbed with Thai sound tracks as early as October 1959. The film library grew and became a significant contribution for the churches of all denominations to use in evangelism and nurture. Radio work commenced in April 1961 and the first television attempts in December 1961, using two of the films. Complaints caused the programs to be suspended for some months. In March 1962 the television programs were resumed and have been regular ever since. An excellent series of Thai radio drama was also produced and aired. These started at Creation and followed the Biblical record. In 1965 all media departments merged under the Baptist Mass Communications. In the 1970's three Thai evangelistic films were produced based on three parables of Jesus. They have been used widely and effectively, especially in rural evangelism.

According to Dr. Ronald Hill, the chairman of the Southern Baptists in Thailand, the decade of the seventies became a "time of transition."³ The turning point pivoted around the First Thailand Congress on Evangelism held in January 1970. During this congress a new evangelistic vision was spawned, and a weekly prayer meeting was begun. Soon this enthusiasm spread from church to church. One result was the funding of the first

³Ronald Hill, typed report "Thailand Baptist Work Related to Southern Baptists," Bangkok, August, 1978, p. 5.

home missionary outreach initiated in Kanchanaburi Province, noted for the Japanese atrocities in building the infamous Burma railroad over the Kwai River in World War II.

During these years realization grew that a change must be effected moving from mission domination to cooperative relationship with national leadership.⁴ In 1971 the mission declared this decade as a transitional period. Joint planning and joint efforts with nationals in planning the work was needed.

In 1971, therefore, the Thai Baptist Church Association was formed. A co-ordinating Committee comprised of the executive committees of the Association and of the Mission facilitated co-operation. Thai leadership increasingly emerged in the institutions also.

In the meantime an Asian Baptist Mission also entered Thailand for church planting.

Philippine Baptists⁵

In 1964 the Philippine Association of Baptists for World Evangelism Inc. sent Rev. Roberto Gequillana to Bangkok to open missionary endeavour there. A small group began meeting in Roberto's home. By 1968 the group moved and organized the Grace Baptist Church meeting on Silom Road in Prasert Christian Bookstore. Later this church moved to St. Louis Lane. In the nine years that followed, one hundred were baptized, but many of these young people left, some because they married Buddhists. In 1979 this church had thirty-five members, almost all of whom were Chinese.

Chinese here means Thai born, Thai speaking Chinese, who may or

⁴Ibid.

⁵The following data came from a personal interview with Pastor Kiat-sak Sriphanadon at Grace Baptist Church, Bangkok, on March 28, 1979.

may not be able to communicate in Chinese, but whose upbringing has been heavily influenced by Chinese culture.

A sister church was pioneered in Nonthaburi Province in 1970. By 1979 twenty Chinese members were established in the Nonthaburi Baptist Church. One member donated a large sum of money to buy land for the church.

A third Chinese work was started among young Chinese professionals in Bang Kow area of Bangkok. By 1979 a dozen Chinese members were meeting regularly.

A fourth outreach was started in the Northeast by a member from Bangkok, a cousin of the senior national pastor, after he moved back to his home area. In 1979 seven members of Chinese and Thai-Isan or Lao backgrounds founded Sakon Nakhon Fundamental Baptist Church.

The emphasis of these Fundamental Baptist churches in Thailand which have no connection with the Thailand Baptist Convention is significant. In 1979 seven Philippino missionaries were connected to the churches. Their primary involvement was in evangelism. The local Thai-Chinese pastors or leaders concentrated on building up the church and handling the internal running of the church. Tithing and self-support were emphasized strongly, both in meeting the normal church expenses, pastoral remuneration, and building programs.

In 1973 the Fundamental Baptists who were initiated by Philippine Baptist missionaries, had two churches with forty-five Chinese members. By 1979 four churches had seventy-four members, most of which were young Thai born Chinese.

Baptists Working in Independent Agencies

Another small outreach in eastern Bangkok was commenced since 1976 through independent Maranatha Baptists from the USA. No church has yet

emerged. In May 1978 three families of this Baptist group were working together in the Mu Barn Seri area of Bangkok.

Many missionaries who are Baptists from various countries work with independent faith missions in Thailand. For example, in 1978 the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, an international interdenominational faith mission formerly called the China Inland Mission, had 258 missionaries in Thailand. Of these a surprising one hundred missionaries were from Baptist churches around the world. Other missions such as Worldwide Evangelization Crusade and New Tribes Mission also have members from Baptist churches.

Naturally it is impossible to define the work of these Baptist missionaries whose work is integrated with others. But the contribution of Baptists in Thailand is broader than purely observed through official Baptists missions.

This concludes a brief summary of the foreign Baptist missionaries in Thailand. Now the fruit of Baptist labors in terms of church growth will be considered.

Baptist Church Growth

Since 1950 Baptist church growth has occurred mainly among Chinese, Karen, Lahu and Thai peoples. First note growth among the Chinese.

The 12th District of the Church of Christ in Thailand comprises the Chinese Baptist Churches. Of the current existing thirteen churches only two were organized prior to 1952, the Maitrichit Chinese Baptist Church (July 1, 1837) and Hua Kun Chae Church, Chanburi (1931).

Since World War II eight Chinese Baptist churches have been organized besides the three chapels connected to Maitrichit Church noted below under indigenous missions. Five of these churches are in Bangkok with

membership between thirty-five and eighty. They are: Bethel Baptist Church (March 18, 1956), Ruam Chit Baptist Church (June 16, 1963 Hakka Dialect), The Community Church, Dindaeng (Feb. 10, 1966), the Sacred Light Baptist Church, Thonburi (Nov. 26, 1967) and Samukkee Church (May 26, 1968). Three churches are in the provinces: (1) Yala Baptist Church (Oct. 10, 1963) established in the far South initially by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, which still has missionaries in fellowship with this church, (2) Maesai Baptist Church, Chiangrai (Dec. 21, 1975) organized in the far North, and (3) Mahachai Baptist Church (July 20, 1957) located about fifty miles south of Bangkok.⁶

Three Christian Community Centers have been developed in crowded neighbourhoods of the capital. The Bangkok Christian Community Center began in 1956 on Rama I Road, but was moved in 1971 to Dindaeng, Phayathai. The Thonburi Christian Community Center was founded Nov. 28, 1965 and is now under the administration of the Sacred Light Baptist Church. The Mai-trichit Christian Community Center was set up in 1975 at Tanon Tok on New Road.

Five schools with over 2,100 students are administered by the 12th District. Some funding comes from the American Baptists for these schools. The True Light Primary School, established in 1935, is the largest with 1,100 students. The Sammuk Christian Academy, Chonburi (1962) and the Christian schools at Mahachai (1973) and Hua Kun Chae (1975) have a full Christian teaching staff and account for another 840 students altogether. The Saeng Prasert Kindergarten started in 1947 has 170 pupils.⁷

⁶Report of the 12th District (Baptist) of the Church of Christ in Thailand, Bangkok, July 28, 1978.

⁷Ibid.

The vibrant growth of the Chinese Baptist churches in the 12th District in post war years can be seen in the following statistics:

	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1978</u>
Churches	6	6	9	18	19
Members	744	808	998	1318	1516

Smaller Chinese growth is also found in the Fundamental Baptist and Southern Baptist churches. There is also a considerable number of Christians from Chinese family backgrounds scattered throughout the Thai churches, but it is difficult to determine how many to any degree of accuracy.

A second important group for church growth is the Karen, the largest tribal group in Thailand. Both Sgaw and Pwo Karen are found in the Church, but the Sgaw Karen predominate. The Pwo have not been as responsive until the last few years.

The growth of the Karen Baptist churches is certainly staggering. In 1952 two Karen associations comprised twenty churches with 875 Christians.⁸ By March 31, 1955 Karen Christians increased to 1,392.⁹ The growth continued to multiply so that by 1968 baptized members totalled 3,042. In 1972 membership rose to 3,791 distributed over twenty organized churches and fifty unorganized church groups. These were served by fifteen ordained Karen ministers and forty-eight unordained church leaders. By 1978 Karen Baptists grew to 6,539 members in thirty-nine churches and various church groups.

The strong growth pattern was interrupted for a time. In 1955 with a large group of young men being baptized, a three year course to train them as leaders was instituted. But by 1963 Cecil Carder, Field Secretary of the American Baptists in Thailand, noted that church growth had levelled off,

⁸ABFMS, Along Kingdom Highways, Annual Report, 1953, p. 12.

⁹Ibid., 1956, p. 12.

and the "leadership, sufficiently developed to feel and enjoy a rather definite control of the conventions affairs, seemed to be more concerned with development of quality than the listing of numbers."¹⁰

The change of emphasis to developing young leaders was apparently detrimental to church growth. In fact, 1964 showed a loss of 8.2 per cent despite 165 baptisms during the year. To stop evangelism in order to consolidate or to withhold outreach in order to train leaders usually leads to restraint on growth. Furthermore, converts were not being conserved despite this emphasis on consolidation. Both nurture and outreach must be developed simultaneously for healthy development.

Furthermore, the missionaries' emphasis on education, health and agriculture, as well as leadership training, also contributed to this stagnation. The leaders training center, started in 1957, focused on youth. It seems that youth as leaders was not as acceptable to the Karen as missionaries thought. Karen social structure traditionally relied on mature, older family and tribal decision makers. Similarly health, education and agricultural projects consumed much time and energy to the detriment of evangelistic outreach and church planting. These social programs replaced a primary emphasis on church growth.¹¹

By 1954 health centers were operating at Bangaow and Musikee and by 1963 another clinic was set up at Maesareiang.¹² Schools were also set up in three Chiangmai villages in 1958. In 1959 the United Village School at Namlat and a Karen Hostel at Maesareiang were opened. Another hostel was operating in Chiangmai. By 1964 291 Karen pupils were in these schools.¹³

¹⁰Ibid., 1964, p. 31.

¹¹Ibid.,

¹²Ibid., 1960, pp. 27, 28.

¹³Ibid., 1965, p. 35.

In 1962 an agricultural center was added at Huay Gaow for demonstration, experimentation and teaching. The American Baptist Mission also gave many scholarships for students to attend.¹⁴

All these social programs took much of the missionaries' time and finance. Though good in themselves, they did detract from the primary purpose of extending the Church among the receptive non-Christian Karen.

After the 1970 Thailand Congress on Evangelism a new vision for outreach was noted. An emphasis on evangelism-in-depth was followed. By 1972 strong numerical growth returned to the Karen Church. The Karen leaders had recognized afresh their responsibility in evangelism and church growth. They set new goals for extension, projecting 10,000 Karen Baptists by 1981. They were only just short of their projections of 6,700 for 1978.

The American Baptists also maintained the Kwai River Christian Mission in Sangkhlaburi which was established in 1962. By 1972 fifty-six members were related to one organized church and four preaching points. In 1976 two churches had about one hundred members. There were also four chapels and many preaching places. A school of 200 students supplemented a hospital which treated 2,500 patients per month in a needy area along the western Thai border.

A third people for Baptist church growth developed among the Lahu, another tribal people. The Lahu live mostly in Southern China and Northern Burma, where they are known as Muser or Musoo. In the last couple of decades an increasing number of Lahu have emigrated to Northern Thailand. When they move they usually do so as whole villages, though sometimes they come as one or two families. In 1979 about three per cent of the 20,000 Lahu in

¹⁴Ibid., 1963, p. 29.

Thailand were Christians. They tend to live in Christian villages, but until recently had little active concern in reaching non-Christian Lahu who live in their own separate villages. The majority of Lahu Christians were believers before they moved into Thailand.

In 1971 the Lahu Church numbered 952 members. By Dec. 1972 thirty-two Lahu congregations had 1,650 members. This increased to forty-eight churches mostly in the Chiangrai Province, with 3,300 members by 1975. In 1978 membership totalled 3,120 distributed among forty-eight churches and eight preaching places. Full time church workers numbered forty-eight plus eleven workers ministering in the Convention and five Lahu associations.

In 1974 twenty-one village schools among the Lahu had 630 pupils, but these were reduced to 450 pupils in thirteen schools by 1976. In 1977 further reductions were made in schools and hostels. An early emphasis of American Baptist missionaries among the Lahu was family planning. A health care plan was brought to all the Lahu villages by 1978. Agricultural projects included Swidden Regeneration and cattle raising. Agricultural evangelism to non-Christian villages was planned in 1977.¹⁵ A breakthrough in evangelism and church planting in these villages was essential to continued growth. Much of the earlier church growth was by transfer more than conversion.

Fourth, growth among the Thai, who have been fairly resistant until post war years, should be noted. Thai Baptist Growth relates mostly to the churches associated with the Southern Baptists. The following statistics shows comparative ethnic church growth of the Southern Baptists over two and a half decades (1953 - 1978):

¹⁵Zen Hawley, "Thailand Lahu Baptist Convention Report for Mission Conference," Fang, 1977.

<u>Year</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Thai</u>	<u>Total</u>
1953	10	65	16	91
1963	109	197	263	569
1973	161	236	983	1380
1978	61	272	1315	1648

The fluctuation of the English congregation related to the build-up and retrenchment of American military presence in Thailand. The Chinese growth has been reasonable. It was 19.8 per cent growth per decade (1963 - 1973).¹⁶ The Thai growth is strongest, although many Chinese would be included in these Thai speaking churches, especially among many of the young people who are Thai-Chinese. By 1979 the total membership of all these churches rose to 1,918 members. In 1978 there were eighteen organized Thai churches and forty-five unorganized groups. Fifty-four Southern Baptist career missionaries assisted twenty-three national pastors besides many lay workers. Between 1952 and 1974 Southern Baptists baptized 2,030 but over one-third of these were lost to the Church. Weaknesses in discipling and enfolding lay at the heart of this loss.

One exciting development in the last few years has been the Baptists' Bangkok urban strategy mission. The strategy revolves around neighbourhood groups and teams of Christians having regular contact with those neighbourhoods. This evangelistic approach is expected to produce new church cells. During 1978 one weekly worship service was begun in one neighbourhood and a Bible study in another.

One final aspect of Baptist church growth is ministry among the Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees since 1975. By August 1978 over 2,100

¹⁶Ronald C. Hill, "Thailand Baptist Church Growth, 1952-1974," A mimeographed report, Bangkok (n.d.).

refugees, mostly Cambodian, had been baptized in the camps for displaced persons in Thailand. Since then many more have been baptized including about 10,000 in early 1980.¹⁷ These statistics are separate from the foregoing.

Certainly Baptist church growth has been encouraging, especially in the 1970's. But the full potential for growth especially among the Karen and Chinese was not adequately grasped or taken. Organization for greater co-operation has also developed during the late 1970's.

Thailand Baptist Convention

On April 18, 1976, the Thailand Baptist Convention was organized to enhance co-operation among the various Baptist groups. Members included the Thailand Baptist Church Association developed under the Southern Baptists, the Chinese Baptist Church from the 12th District of the Church of Christ in Thailand, as well as the Lahu Baptist Convention and some associations of the Karen Baptist Convention associated with American Baptists.

In July 1978 over 12,000 members of Baptist churches from many ethnic groups in Thailand were represented in the Thailand Baptist Convention. However, many Baptist churches chose to remain outside the convention, exercising their freedom and autonomy as Baptists.¹⁸

Growing co-operation is also evident in indigenous Thai missions.

Indigenous Baptist Missions in Thailand

Baptists have long been burdened for home missions. Since 1950 much of the Karen Baptist expansion was due to strong home missions to

¹⁷Personal letter to writer from Bill Smith, Feb. 5, 1980.

¹⁸Hill, op. cit.

pioneer areas supported by the Karen Baptist churches and association.

The expansion of the Chinese churches has also been largely as a result of home missions especially from the Maitrichit Church founded in 1837. The endeavours of this oldest Chinese Protestant Church in Asia resulted in the establishing of the Taladplu Chapel, Thonburi (1952), Trok Chan Chapel, Bangkok (Nov. 1963), and Tao-Poon Chapel, Bangsue (June 1977). Each of these churches had over thirty members in July 1976.¹⁹

Most of these foregoing home missions have been mono-cultural, Chinese reaching Chinese, Karen reaching Karen. It has been only recently that cross cultural missions have been projected.

The 12th District of the Church of Christ in Thailand, the Baptist churches, has exhibited an expanding missionary vision. Between 1968 and 1977 six chapels have been established in the hilly areas of Chiangrai in the North. Many of the people are Chinese immigrants from Yunnan Province of South China. Preaching is done in Mandarin and Thai. In 1978 there were 194 members in these six churches. Some help was given by the Second Thai District of Chiangrai as well.²⁰

In January 1978 the Thailand Christian Mission was inaugurated with Chinese members of various churches. Basically this has been a funding mission so far, but its objective is to send out missionaries to various areas and peoples of Thailand. It is expected that some Thai missionaries to pioneer areas may be supported from this indigenous Chinese Mission.

On Nov. 5, 1978 the Maitrichit Mission was constituted with the goal of missions to other Thai and Chinese. The Faith, Hope and Love evangelism

¹⁹Report of the 12th District, op. cit.

²⁰Ibid.

band of the Maitrichit Church have also been active in evangelistic efforts to Northeast Thailand.

The Immanuel Baptist Church, a Thai church of the Thailand Baptist Church Association, has in the last two years (1978-1980) begun an active outreach to Thai Cambodians who were working on drainage projects in Bangkok. From this small beginning came fruitful results. This church has also begun reaching Thai Cambodians in Eastern Thailand, particularly through the relatives and friends of those contacted in Bangkok. In Eastern Thailand are some one and a half million Cambodian speaking Thai, but very few are Christian. This venture is an exciting mission.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, prospects for present and future advance must be considered.

First, the earlier neglect of Siam by the Baptists has been reversed with encouraging advances in church growth. Baptists have redeemed themselves in this post war era.

Second, the most receptive populations in Thailand at present are the Chinese and the Karen, especially the Sgaw Karen. Baptists have significant work among both. Neither the Karen nor the Chinese church extension has yet reached their potential growth in terms of the current receptivity. This calls for greater concentrated evangelistic outreach aimed at increased church planting among Karen and Chinese. Baptists should give this priority in the decades ahead, with concern for both evangelism and nurture.

Third, a good foothold had been gained in Thai and Lahu churches. The potential here for pioneer evangelism is unlimited. A strong second front must be extended to these two peoples. The spiritual harvest should

be gathered in while it is ripening.

Fourth, there are many units of population that could be reached by Baptists and Baptist churches. Besides the opportunities in urban areas are those among rural populations, tribal peoples and displaced persons. A new vision and dedicated obedience to reach out to these unreached peoples could transform many Baptist churches in the decades ahead. The foundations laid in Thai Christian missions and local church missions should be developed in active mission to this end. Evangelistic missions should become a known concept and practice in all Baptist churches and foreign missions.

Fifth, the encouraging work Baptists have had among the Cambodian refugees should be increased. Though this appears to be a fluid situation, still the greatest amount of winning and teaching these people for Christ should be undertaken now. There has never before been greater receptivity among the Cambodians. Furthermore, Baptists should make every effort to follow these Cambodian Christians up in the third countries to which they go. A concentrated effort to plant ethnic Cambodian churches speedily among those people who go to the USA and France should have top priority in the next few years.

So setting these goals and implementing practical strategies to reach them will set the pace for greater advance for Baptists in Thailand during the decade ahead.

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