

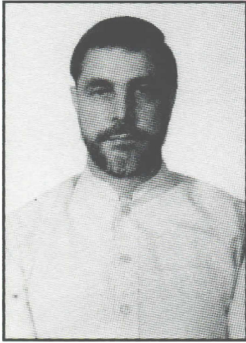


Jaakko Mäkelä

KHRISCHAK ISSARA

The Independent Churches in Thailand,
Their Historical Background, Contextual Setting,
and Theological Thinking.

๑๘ พระเยซูจึงเสด็จเข้ามาใกล้ แล้วตรัสกับเขาว่า “อุทธานุภาพทั้งสิ้นในสวรรค์ก็ดี ในแผ่นดินโลกก็ดีทรงมอบไว้แก่เราแล้ว” ๑๙ เหตุฉะนั้นเจ้าทั้งหลายจงออกไปสั่งสอนชนทุกชาติ ให้เป็นสาวกของเรา” ให้รับบัพติศมาในพระนามแห่งพระบิดา พระบุตร และพระวิญญาณบริสุทธิ์ ๒๐ สอนเขาให้ถือรักษาสิ่งสารพัดซึ่งเราได้สั่งพวกเจ้าไว้ นี้แหละเราจะอยู่กับเจ้าทั้งหลายเสมอไป จนกว่าจะสิ้นยุค”



Jaakko Juhani Mäkelä

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Cover Figure: Bible text Mt:28:18-20 in Thai.

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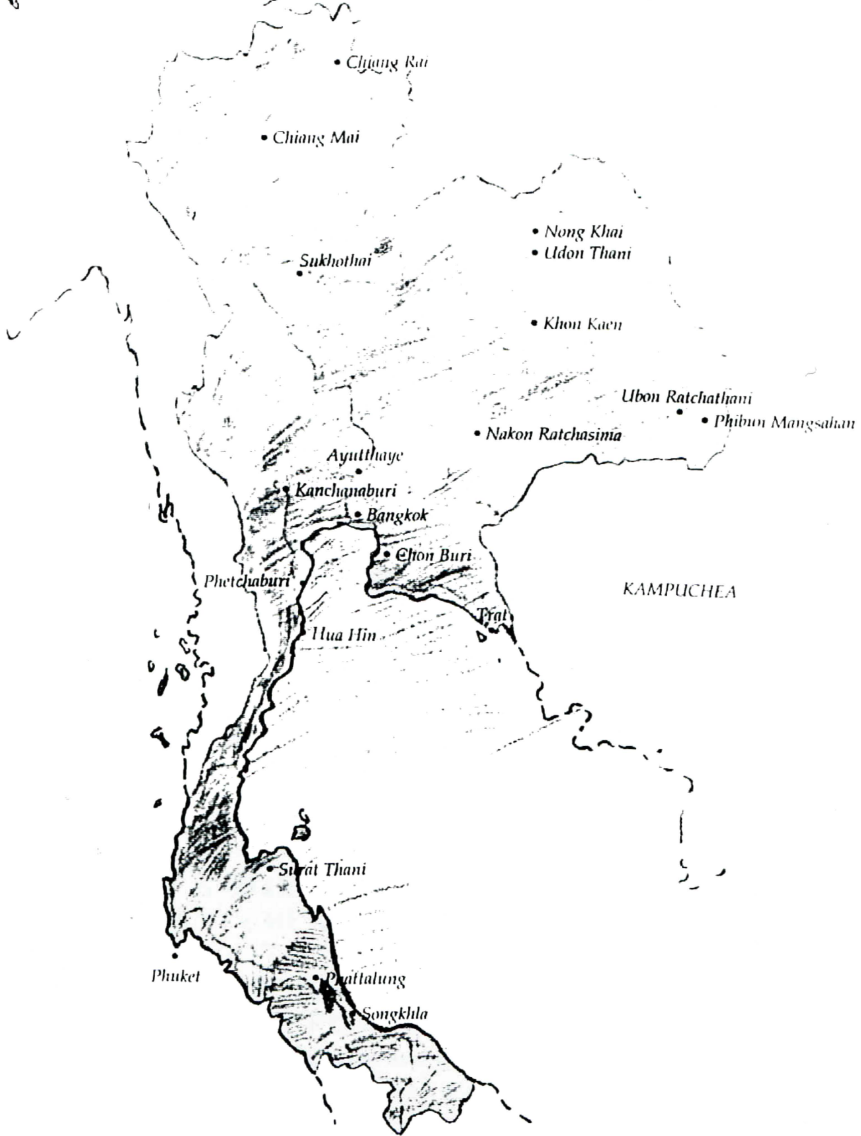


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GLOSSARY

<i>Khrischak</i>	Church, mostly denotes a local organized church
<i>Sapha Khrischak</i>	Church, denomination, used for the Church of Christ in Thailand and some member organizations of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand
<i>Khrischak Issara</i>	Independent church
<i>Phra Sasanachak</i>	Church, used by the Roman Catholics
<i>Thammanoon</i>	Constitution
<i>Sapha</i>	Council, organization, (legislative) body, institution, assembly, house (of legislature), association
<i>Khristian</i>	Christian, used mostly for Protestants
<i>Khristang</i>	Christian, used exclusively for Roman Catholics
<i>Khristachon</i>	Christian, used to denote both Protestants and Roman Catholics
<i>Samachik somboon</i>	Full member
<i>Samachik samroong</i>	Associate member
<i>Sasanacharn</i>	Ordained minister
<i>Sitsayaphiban</i>	Pastor, pastoral leader of a local church
<i>Khru Sasana</i>	Commissioned church worker, used by the CCT
<i>Phuprakat</i>	Evangelist
<i>Phu pokrong</i>	Elder, in every day usage used for guardians of a minor.
<i>Rap chuea</i>	“To receive the Faith”. Profession of Faith
<i>Phra</i>	A title prefixed to the names of Buddhist monks, temples, holy objects, divine beings or the member of the Royal Family.
<i>Phra Chao</i>	Title for the King, used for God by Christians.
<i>Sanasart</i>	Science of Religion, Theology
<i>Triekhananuphap</i>	Holy Trinity
<i>Sangha</i>	Buddhist Order of monks
<i>Muban</i>	Village
<i>Tambol</i>	Administrative unit consisting of several villages
<i>Amphoe</i>	District
<i>Changwat</i>	Province
<i>Phak</i>	Region, part, section, term (of a school)
<i>Muang</i>	Town, city center, country (Muang Thai = Thailand)

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I tro og tjeneste. Det Norske Misjonsselskap 1842-1992. Misjonshøgskolen, Stavanger. 1992.

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Pori, October 29, 2000

Jaakko Mäkelä

1. INTRODUCTION

Independent churches have become a global phenomenon. The term "independent church" is usually applied to new churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, separate from the historical Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. An increasing number of churches have been established without financial, organizational or personnel ties with Western churches. It is difficult, however to formulate a universally valid definition for an independent church.

The independent churches have generally been understood as a form of indigenous Christianity trying to break free from the domination of the Western mission agencies. This opinion needs some modification. The Asian and African churches established by mission agencies have become autonomous, but this has not stopped the increase in the number of independent churches. In addition, existing studies indicate contacts to American, and later also to Asian, mostly Pentecostal or non-denominational Evangelical mission organizations or missionaries, during the formative years of independent churches. The influence of American evangelicalism should be taken seriously. The rise of the independent churches should be discussed not only in the context of mission agencies and emerging national Churches, but also in the context of the emergence of a new type of churches and Christian organizations, separate from the historical Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.

In 1982, David B. Barrett proposed a classification of seven historico-cultural ecclesiastical blocs and 156 traditions. According to Barrett, the seven blocs are Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, Protestantism, Marginal Protestantism, Catholicism (Non-Roman), and Non-White Indigenous Christianity. The Non-White Indigenous Christianity comprises of churches begun on Black, Non-White or Non-European initiative in Third-World countries, or among Non-White or Non-European minorities elsewhere, since the year 1500. It thus includes such groups as the Black indigenous churches in the United States of America, and the independent churches in Asia and Africa.¹

Barrett summarizes the methodology in forming the typology as follows:

"To sum up, when attempting to describe and analyze the Christian world in terms of handful of ecclesiastico- cultural major blocs, the best criterion is to ask from whence the major or predominant initiatives and ongoing impulses came and continue to come, and where they look to for their major or predominant world spiritual headquarters; who the initiating or dominant peoples are, and what ethnolinguistic families, races and colour, and what types of world they belong to."²

¹David B. Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia. A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World. A.D. 1900-2000. Oxford University Press. Oxford, New York, Nairobi. 1982, 56-62.

²Ibid, 62.

The typology presented by Barrett is historico-culturally relevant, but theologically it creates serious problems. The result of this typology is the division of the traditions. Some of the Pentecostals are listed under the heading Protestants, part as Non-White indigenous. Similarly, Lutherans, Methodists, and Baptists are found in both groups.³

In the *World Churches Handbook* the Churches are divided into Trinitarian and Non-Trinitarian Churches. The Trinitarian Churches are further divided into Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Indigenous and Other Churches. This classification seems to be more relevant for this study than the typology presented by Barrett. However, definition between the Indigenous and Other Churches in the *World Churches Handbook* is problematic. For example, the independent churches in Thailand are presented in the category Other Churches.⁴

The expansion of the independent churches is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. They first became known in South Africa, and the debate on the African independent churches has influenced the discussion on the independent churches as whole. Bengt Sundkler has done the pioneering work in this field. The term "independent church" is a theological term. It is used for Christian churches and movements but it seems to be difficult to define exactly the borderline between the Christian churches and movements and other religious movements. Several classifications have been made. Sociologists prefer the term New Religious Movements including the whole variety of religious movements.⁵

³Ibid, 14-

⁴ World Churches Handbook. Based on the Operation World database by Patrick Johnstone. WEC International, 1993. Edited by Dr. Peter Brierley. Christian Research, London. 1997, 13-14, 811- 816.

⁵ Bengt G.M. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa. Lutterworth Library. Vol. XXXII. Missionary Research Series N. 14. Lutterworth Press, London. 1948, 53-55. In 1948, Sundkler divided the South African independent churches into two groups he called "Ethiopian" and "Zionist". In 1960, he proposed a third type, called "Messianic". Bengt Sundkler, Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists. Oxford studies in African Affairs. Oxford University Press. London 1976, 305-308. In 1986 Dean S. Gillinand proposed the following typology: Primary evangelical-Pentecostal, secondary evangelical-pentecostal, revelational indigenous, and indigenous eclectic. Dean S Gillinand, How "Christian" Are African Independent Churches. *Missiology. An International Review*. July 1986. Harold W Turner has the following typology: Neo-Primal Movements, Syncretistic Movements, Hebraist Movements and Independent Churches. The Independent Churches intend to be Christian and retain the whole Bible and usually some kind of Christology. Harold W. Turner, Religious Innovation in Africa. *Collected Essays on New Religious Movements*. G.K. Hall, Boston. 1979, 56-57. On New Religious Movements: New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change. Edited by James A. Beckford. Sage Publications/Unesco. 1986, I-XV.

1.1. EXTENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

Three findings on the extent of expansion of the independent churches are indicative. First, there is an increase in new denominations. In 1900, there was a global total of 1,900 denominations. In 1970, the number had increased to 19,410, in 1980 to 20,780, and was projected to be 33,800 by 2000. The net increase in the 1980s was 270 new denominations per year. Secondly, in 1980 16,100 denominations, with over 42 million members, had no conciliar ties of any sort. Thirdly, it has become apparent that there are large churches, which do not define themselves under anyone of the three traditional branches of the Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism.⁶

Due to lack of commonly accepted definition, it is difficult to give exact statistical information on the extent of the independent churches. During the twentieth century, the number of independent churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has increased. Simultaneously, independent and interdenominational churches and Christian organizations have increased in Europe and especially in North America. New expansive movements, such as Pentecostalism, have been born in America, separate from the historical churches. Since the 1960s several reports on the independent church growth were recorded in Africa, and also in Asia. In 1985 the estimated combined membership in independent churches was 33 million in Africa alone. In Asia, in the 1980s the two independent churches, the Assembly Hall and the True Jesus Church constituted approximately 23 per cent of the Protestant community in Taiwan.⁷

⁶Barret 1982, 17, 56. Rapidly expanding denominations in areas of full religious liberty only join existing councils in small number; hard-pressed denominations under repression or harassment find in conciliar membership a new avenue of new life. In two or three decades most councils seem to find their final level in the number of denominations who want to join. After that only a handful of new churches join in comparison with the vast number of new denominations coming into existence each year.

⁷David B. Barrett, Schism and renewal in Africa. An Analysis of six thousand Contemporary Religious movements. Oxford University Press. Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Lusaka. 1968, 64-75, 78-79. According to Barrett, by 1967, the estimate for the adherents of the 5,000 independent churches in Africa was seven million, with possibly up to 400,000 additions each year. The 1985 estimate according to C.M. Pauw in: African Independent Churches Today. Kaleidoscope of Afro-Christianity. Edited by M.C. Kitshoff. African Studies. Volume 44. The Edwin Mellen Press. Lewinston/Queenston/Lampeter. 1996, 19-25

Allen J. Swanson. Taiwan: Mainline versus Independent Church Growth. A Study in Contrast. William Carey Library. South Pasadena, California. 1970, 16-18, 64, 173-175 By 1962 about 150,000 of the estimated 275,000 Evangelical Christians in Mexico belonged to the independent churches. Independent churches can be found in most countries in Asia, possibly excluding the Islamic Middle-eastern countries. According to Swanson, in China in 1921, the True Jesus Church had an estimated membership of 80,000 and was the third largest body after the Church of Christ in China (166,000 members) and the China Inland Mission (89,655). The Assembly Hall (or Little Flock) had 70,000 members. Statistics from Mainland China were not available in 1970 when the Assembly Hall had over 30,000 adult members in Taiwan. In 1959 4,000 members were reported in Southeast Asia, and churches were established in America and Europe. On the 1980s in Taiwan: Allen J Swanson, Mending the Nets. Taiwan Church Growth and Loss in the 1980s. William Carey Library. Pasadena, California. 1986, 33-39. On the True

The Non-White Indigenous bloc, as presented by Barret apparently includes the independent churches. In 1900, this bloc comprised 7,241,000 adherents, only 0.4 percent of the total of Christians. In 1980, the number of adherents was 67,131,000, comprising 1.5 percent of the total and was 296,297,000 in 1990.⁸ According to the *World Churches Handbook*, the combined membership of the Indigenous Churches and Other Churches was 84,075,000 in 1995.⁹

Characteristics for the independent churches have been presented. They are understood to be free of foreign subsidy, management, influence, organization or anything else that might encroach upon their own freedom. They attempt to be reform movements of an over-Europeanized Christianity. The independent churches are seen as a reaction to the institutionalism of the mission churches. They are said to attempt to reduce class resistance with a minimum of denationalization, and mobilize the laity in evangelization.¹⁰

Jesus Church: Deng Zhaoming, The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today II. Bridge. No. 63. January-February 1994. Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture. Hong Kong. 2-5, 11. According to Deng, the True Jesus Church had in 1992 over 75,000 members in 393 churches in Asia but also in Africa, America and Europe. In addition there were said to be several hundred thousand believers in Mainland China. The True Jesus Church had two churches with a combined membership of 150 in Thailand. The "TJC traced its beginnings to the Pentecostal movement in the West".

In Japan in the middle of the 1960s, the Mykyokai or "Non-Church" movement had an estimated 50,000 to 75,000 members, and the Spirit of Jesus Church 46,000 members. Swanson 1970, 16-18. 64, 173-175. In Hong Kong the Protestant churches are divided into around sixty different denominations of various sizes, plus more than two hundred smaller independent church groups and congregations. The combined Protestant membership in 1994 was 381,2000. According to the 1995 survey, the Christians formed 12,1 percent of the population (Roman Catholics 4,4%, Protestants 8,4%). The percentage of Christians is increasing. Håkan Granberg, Church Planting Commitment. New Church Development in Hong Kong during the Run-Up to 1997. Åbo Akademi University Press. 2000, 17-19. It is reported that in Nepal there are at least 75 independent churches in the capital city Katmandu. Many of these have arisen out of church splits. Some may be quite large and have their own daughter churches, others may be tiny fellowships. UMN Church Relations Office. April 1998. Photocopy. (UMN, United Mission to Nepal)

An example from a traditionally religiously homogeneous country: In Finland in 1995 85,5 percent of the population belonged to the Lutheran Church. Roughly one percent belonged to the Pentecostal movement, and little less than one percent belonged to other religious communities. In the 1980s and 1990s several independent churches which do not identify themselves with the Pentecostal movement or other traditional Protestant churches have emerged. Most of these have connections to American churches or movements. See: Harri Heino, Mihin Suomi tänään usko. WSOY, Porvoo-Helsinki-Juva. 1997, 15-26, 93-174.

⁸Barret 1982, 6, 85. Membership was projected to be 379,054,000 by mid 2000. Global Evangelization Movement. Ed. David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson. Online URL: <http://www.gem.werc.org/index.htm>. June 2000.

⁹World Churches Handbook 1997, 13, 14. The community related to these churches was 177,676,000 persons.

¹⁰Swanson 1970, 19-22. Barret 1982, 161-174.

According to Barret, most of the African movements that have led to the establishment of independent churches have emerged in areas where there has been intense Christian missionary activity for several decades. He attempted to demonstrate that causation of the emergence of independent churches depends on the accumulation of a number of different factors. Finally he came to see culture clash as the root cause common to the entire movement of independency. According to Harold Turner, the African independent churches have usually been linked to changes caused by modernization in the primal or tribal communities.¹¹

The Asian independent churches seem to differ from the African independent churches. In the Asian context, the emergence of the independent churches seems to be an urban phenomenon, and is fastest in the fast-growing urban centers.

The studies on independent churches usually emphasize the autonomous nature of these churches. Less interest has been paid to the fact that Pentecostal or independent evangelical missionaries have been involved with the independent churches during their formative years. These connections should be taken more seriously. Several studies refer to the connections to the Western mission organizations and missionaries. According to Sundkler, the early independent Churches in South Africa in the beginning of the 20th century were in contact with Pentecostal and other Evangelical, mainly American missionaries, and received influences from them. Turner reports connections to Pentecostal churches and missionaries in Nigeria. According to Deng Zhaoming, the independent Chinese True Jesus Church “traced its beginnings to the Pentecostal movement in the West”.¹²

It will be demonstrated that the independent churches should be understood as a part of the fragmentation, which has been going on in the Protestant Christianity since the beginning of the 20th century. American Evangelicalism, and especially

¹¹Barret 1968, 3, 98, 156-157. According to Barret, the missionaries failed to practice love as understanding. The lack of brotherly contact with Africans led directly to a failure to understand Africanism sufficiently well to differentiate the good elements in it from the bad. Finally, the missionaries failed to discern the existence of any links or parallels between Africanism and the biblical pattern of life. Turner 1979, 3-8.

¹² On South Africa: Sundkler 1948,40-43, 47-50. Sundkler deals with the beginnings of the “Zionist” churches. “The fanciful names of the Zulu Zionist Churches are only individual variations on a theme once intoned on the shores of Lake Michigan, United States.” (page 49) The first contacts were to the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. Sundkler characterizes this church as apocalyptic. Its missionaries baptized the first group of Africans in 1904. Since 1908 the Pentecostals became involved. Among Pentecostals was also European P. L. le Roux. Black American missionaries were involved with the early “Ethiopian” churches. See also Sundkler 1976, 306, 312, 321-323.

On Nigeria: Turner 1979, 125- 128. The first contacts were to the Faith Tabernacle Church in Pennsylvania in the early 1920s. After that there has been contacts to several Pentecostal churches, including the British Apostolic Church. “Other Pentecostal literature also circulated widely in Nigeria.” (page 126) On True Jesus Church: Deng Zhaoming 1994,2-3. The teachings of the True Jesus Church were derived from the Pentecostals, the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Baptists.

Pentecostalism, has had a central role in this process. It has contributed to the fragmentation directly, by actions of North American mission agencies and independent missionaries, and indirectly, through churches and movements originating in America, which have spread to other parts of the world. The most notable of these is the Pentecostal movement. The independent churches are only partly the results of conflicts between mission organization and emerging national Churches. Rather the conflict is between the historical Protestant Churches and new movements born outside these churches.

1.2. INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN THAILAND

The first independent churches in Thailand were born as protest against the existing Churches and mission organizations. The Protestant work had continued for more than a hundred years before the first independent churches were established. The later independent churches have been involved in controversies as well, but the main motivation has often been the desire to build a fast growing church. The independent churches have had contacts with mission agencies and missionaries, mostly with Pentecostals and non-denominational Evangelicals. In some cases missionaries have been formally co-operating with them. The churches have received financial support from abroad. Some of them have established institutions very much similar to the institutions of the mission organizations and national Churches. The independent churches in Thailand are in a process of becoming involved in cross-cultural mission and evangelism.

This study deals with the independent churches which are, or have been, members of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand (EFT), or are in the process of applying for membership in it. The EFT is a co-operational organization, not a national Church (denomination). It has no authority to control the theology or internal affairs of its members. Its membership comprises of two categories, local churches and Christian organizations. According to the Constitution of the EFT, a group of Christians that comes regularly together for worship, and has adopted a statement of faith and a constitution, is considered to be a church.

The independent churches in this study have become organized to the extent of having formed their church constitution and confessional statement. The independent churches can be found in all of the four regions of Thailand but are clearly concentrated in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area: Bangkok and parts of the neighboring provinces of Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan. The Bangkok Metropolitan Area, with a population of almost 8,8 million in 1992, is by far the largest urban center in Thailand. The patterns of expansion of the urban churches are different compared with the small town or rural churches. The independent churches in this study are churches born in Thailand, not extensions of foreign churches or organizations. In 1987 the number of independent churches in the EFT was 49, and it had risen to 75 in 1999.¹³

In addition to the churches included in this study, there are other religious groups in Thailand that are not recognized by the officially registered organizations. Religious movements begun in other parts of the world have tried to enter Thailand. There are

¹³*Khrischak Issara thi sangkad kap Sahakit Khristian haeng Prathet Thai*. EFT Office, 1987. *Khrischak Issara nai sangkad Sahakit Khristian haeng Prathet Thai*. EFT Office 1999. (Independent Churches affiliated with the EFT). *Key statistics of Thailand 1994*. National Statistical Office. Office of the Prime Minister. 1994, 6. (In Thai and English.) *Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand*. *Sine Anno*, Section 2, Section 4, Section 5.

only few attempts to form indigenous syncretistic movements in Thailand.¹⁴

The term independent church, *khrischak issara*, is commonly used in Thailand. *Khrischak* is the Thai term for a church, *issara* means freedom and independence. The independent churches form a special membership category in the EFT. Although the term is commonly used, it is difficult to define. A status of an individual local church may change. It may begin as an independent church but join a denomination later, or it may be established by missionaries but later become independent. The following definition is used in this study:

An independent church, *khrischak issara*, is a Church (denomination) or a congregation which has been established by Thai Christians without the consent of organized national Churches or mission agencies. It functions as an independent body without affiliation to organized national Churches or mission agencies.

The independent churches have begun as one local body. Later, when the work has been expanded, different structures have developed. Most of the independent churches are or have been members of the EFT or are in the process of joining it. The definition mentioned above is still valid, because the EFT is a co-operational organization.

A summary of the ages of the independent churches in Thailand is presented in Table 1.

With few exceptions, the independent churches have been founded after 1965. In 1987, their membership comprised almost 25 percent of the Protestant community in Bangkok. Within the EFT, the independent churches formed half of the community. In 1998 the independent churches formed 10-11 percent of the entire Protestant community in Thailand. (Tables 8. and 10.) An estimation can be made using Tables 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 as basis that the independent churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area (excluding Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church) have approximately 5300 members. If half of the members of Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church are living in Bangkok, the total membership of the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area could be between 9,00 and 10,000. Statistics for the Protestant community in Bangkok as a whole in 1998 are not available¹⁵

¹⁴ Groups such as the Mormons, the Jehova's Witnesses, the Children of God, the Unification Church (the Moonies), and the Grace of Jesus Christ Crusade (followers of the Latter-Day Elijah from Mt Zion in Taiwan), are operating in Thailand. Movements, such as the Hoopha Sawan center, and the movement identifying Christ with Phra Ariya Metrai, a future Saviour found in some Buddhist texts, should be mentioned. The popular Thai Buddhism itself contains a variety of beliefs and practices. This has made it difficult for distinct syncretistic movements to emerge.

¹⁵See: *Phairoj Napawan. Khomun karnsamruad saphap khrischak nai Krungthep Mahanakorn. Khanakammakarn Sangsoem Karnprakat khong Khrischak nai K.T.M. Mulniti Suphanimit haeng Prathet Thai.* 1986, 11. (Conditions of the churches in Bangkok). The number of Protestants was estimated as 13 000 in 1984. In 1998 the estimated membership of the EFT related churches was 50,450. *Samachik nai*

Table 1. Independent churches in Thailand in 1999. Summary of the ages of the churches.

Year of Establishm.	Number of Churches
1945-1949	1
1950-1959	2
1960-1969	5
1970-1979	31
1980-1989	29
1990-	10
Total	78

Table 1. Includes the 75 independent churches registered by the EFT, the Hope of Bangkok Church which has been a member of the EFT, and two new independent churches which have not yet applied for membership in the EFT. The exact year of establishment is not always available. In those cases the year of accepting the church as a member of the EFT is used as a basis for estimating the year of establishment. It is supposed that the churches have been established at least three years before they have applied for membership in the EFT:

sangkad S.K.T. Praphet Khrischak lae ongkarn. 1998. (Members in the EFT related churches and organizations).

1.3. THE TASK, METHODS AND PROCEDURE OF THE RESEARCH

The independent churches are interesting for two reasons. They have been growing rapidly, and have developed organizational patterns suitable for expansion. Secondly, they have brought forth important theological questions. Ecclesiological questions became topical in the controversies around the birth of the first independent churches. Before that focus had mostly been in questions concerning the individual Christian life.

This study is a study of theological thinking among the independent churches in Thailand. The understandings on the church, the membership in the church, and the ministry of the church have been important among the doctrinal themes. The research covers a time period from 1938 until the end of the 1990s. The research has taken place in two phases. In 1993 I presented my dissertation for the Licentiate in Theology degree at Åbo Akademi University on the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. Material for this research was mainly collected in the end of the 1980s. During the 1990s I have collected more material. It is thus possible to follow the changes that have taken place in the 1990s.

As is common for missiological studies, the doctrinal questions must be discussed in the context of the actual situation in the churches. The churches included in this study are young, and the formulation of the doctrines has been only one of their urgent concerns. It is therefore not possible to understand the doctrinal emphasis of the independent churches without taking into account the context where these thoughts have been born. Much interest is paid to the context of the entire Protestant community, but this is justified, since developments in the Protestant community have shaped the independent churches.

This study is presented as a missiological study in Systematic Theology. During the process of research, it became obvious that the historical process must be studied at a greater depth than first expected. The main reason is that the developments leading to the emergence of the first independent churches have not been studied systematically. For this reason, the large section on the history and the contextual setting of the churches is necessary. However, this is not a practical study of the functions of the churches; nor is this a church growth study, although aspects of the growth must be discussed.

The first independent churches after the Second World War attempted to establish a "true church" by refusing to restore the leaders who, under pressure of war, kept silent or renounced their faith. Generally, holiness has been one of the concerns of the independent churches. In this connection, the question of baptism has become topical as well, even though baptism has been a debated topic from the early years of the Protestant work. Later, new ideas on the theological significance and the organization the church, and on membership in the church have been explicitly brought forth by some of the independent churches.

The independent churches have been dealing with important doctrinal questions. This has been done in a situation where the churches have been struggling for survival, or, in some cases, expanding rapidly. The documents have not been written for academic research; rather, the purpose has been to express how that particular church has understood itself, sometimes in relation to other churches. For this reason, the doctrinal questions must be discussed in connection with their historical, social and theological context.

The doctrinal themes have been presented in forms that often can not be subjected to thorough analysis. However, it should be possible to study how these thoughts have emerged, and find their roots. Further, it should be possible to form categories into which the diverse understandings can be divided. In some categories, deeper analysis might be possible.

This study could be seen as an introduction to the studies on the independent churches in Thailand. The purpose is to introduce the churches as they actually exist, and to present the theological themes that have been important to them. This study can also be seen as a contribution to the discussion on the history of theological thought in Thailand. To a lesser degree, this study can also give information on the beginnings and contemporary patterns in the cross-cultural mission of the Asian churches.

A combination of methods will be used. First, methods of historical research will be employed. The independent churches are discussed as historical phenomena, and their origins and developments are described and analyzed. Their emergence is discussed in connection to the developments in the Protestant community in Thailand, and also to developments in other parts of the world.

The research is based on analysis of the historical records kept by various churches, and on information collected by questionnaires and interviews. The constitutions and confessional statements often contain information about the history of the churches. This material is used to analyze the process of formation of the independent churches until the end of the 1990s.

In addition to the historical approach, a sociological approach is used. The findings of the research on Thai society are employed in order to analyze how the independent churches have adapted themselves to the contemporary society and its structures. However, no statistical methods are used; the presentation is mainly based on a review of the literature.

A classification of independent churches in Thailand will be presented, based on common features in the history and the present conditions of the churches.

The theological themes important to the independent churches are discussed in the context in which they have been born. The method can be called historicogenetic. The influences that have shaped the doctrinal thought of the Thai Christian

community will be introduced, as well as general theological concerns of Thai Christians. The concern has focused on the (soteriological) significance of the church and the organization of the church. Soteriological questions and sacraments are discussed in connection with defining the membership in the church.

The various understandings of the independent churches will be described and contextually analyzed. The source material is used to find the ideas common to the independent churches. A classification will be made when different understandings are found. It will also be analyzed how the independent churches have developed the doctrinal themes, and how this process has influenced them.

Finally, some comparisons are made. The purpose of the comparison is to demonstrate how the theological thinking of the independent churches can be related to contemporary theological trends and historical theological traditions.

After this introduction, the research is organized into three main chapters.

Chapter 2, Thai Society and the Church in Thailand, is mostly based on the review of literature on Thai society, and on the history and present conditions of the churches in Thailand. In the review of church history in Thailand, emphasis will be placed on the growth patterns and the developments of church organization and ministries.

Chapter 3, The History and Contextual Setting of the Independent Churches, concentrates on the history of the independent churches and their adaptations to the conditions of the Thai society.

Chapter 4, Theology of the Independent Churches, begins with an introduction to the influences that have shaped the doctrinal thought of the Thai Christian community, and general theological interests of Thai Christians. After that the theological themes important to the independent churches will be described and their development and influences will be analyzed. Finally, an attempt will be made to relate the independent churches to the contemporary theological trends and historical theological traditions.

1.4. SOURCES AND LITERATURE

The primary sources for this study are church constitutions, confessional statements, teaching material, and other documents produced by the independent churches. Books written by the leaders of the independent churches can also be considered as primary sources because these individuals, as founders of the churches, have shaped their churches. Most of this material is in Thai. Information has been collected by questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were drafted in both Thai and in English. Most interviews have not been recorded. Most of the interviews were conducted in Thai and notes were made in English. An exception is a long interview with Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn in 1979 made by Chajan Hiraphan. It has been transcribed from the tape. The interviews are used to find clues, and conclusions based only on interviews have been avoided.

The Payap University Archives in Chiang Mai contains microfilms and documents from the early years of the American Presbyterian Mission and the Church of Christ in Thailand to recent times. These include minutes of different committees and meetings and correspondence, especially between the missionaries in Thailand and the Home Board in the USA. This archive material is used especially for the period from 1938 to 1950. The Payap University Archives is the only professionally maintained Christian archive in Thailand to date. The Archives of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand were not as yet available to the general public in 1999.

Earlier studies on Thai Christianity will be used as references. The most comprehensive work in Thai church history is Alex G. Smith's *Siamese Gold. A History of Church Growth in Thailand. An Interpretative Analysis 1816-1982. (1982)*. As the title suggests, it is a church growth study, the main interest being on discovering the growth patterns and reasons for growth or lack of growth. In conjunction with the Centenary of the Protestant Missions in 1928, George Bradley McFarland edited *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928*. A reprint has been made in 1999. Kenneth E Wells' *History of Protestant Work in Thailand 1828-1958 (1958)* was designed to take the place of McFarland's publication. Wells condensed its text and updated the record to 1958. Prasit Pongudom's *Prawatsart Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai (History of the Church of Christ in Thailand, 1984)* is the first major work on Thai church history written in Thai by a Thai national.

Herbert R. Swanson's *Khrischak Muang Nua (1984)* is a critical study of the development of models for ministry, church administration and training in Northern Thailand 1867-1920. These developments were in connection with the relationship between the Laos Mission (Northern Thailand) of the Presbyterian Church in the USA and the emerging Christian community, which later became the strongest part of the Church of Christ in Thailand. Although Swanson's study concerns the early years in the North, it is useful for this study, since many problems dealt with during that time are still on the agenda of churches of today.

The theological thoughts of the early missionaries have been studied. Herbert R. Swanson studied the thoughts of the missionaries of the Northern Thailand until 1920. Maen Pongudom, in *Apologetic and Missionary Proclamation (1979)*, deals with the missionaries' understanding on Buddhism. Donald C. Lord (*Mo Bradley and Thailand, 1969*) and Nanthachai Mejudhon (*Meekness: A new Approach to Christian Witness to the Thai People, 1997*) deal with Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, one of the most famous pioneer missionaries.

In 1996, to commemorate the 50 years of the Pentecostal ministry in Thailand, two books were published in Thai by Pentecostal missionaries, who had been serving long time in Thailand. Hannu Kettunen published *Thung ruangthong*, a history of the ministry of the Finnish Foreign Free Mission in Thailand (FFFM) and the local churches established by the FFFM. The FFFM has been the pioneering Pentecostal mission agency in Thailand. Robert Nishimoto's work is titled *Prawat Pentecost lae Kharismatic nai Prathet Thai*. It consists of three parts. First, it gives a summary of the history of the church from a Pentecostal point of view. Secondly, it presents the history of the ministry of the major Pentecostal organizations in Thailand. Thirdly, it presents information on independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Thailand.

A major work on contextualization in Thailand has been done by John R. Davis in his work *Poles Apart? Contextualizing the Gospel* in 1993. The students and teachers at the theological institutes have prepared dissertations for different academic degrees. Very few of them have been published. However, many of them deal with the historical or contemporary context of the churches in Thailand.

Information on Christian organizations is published in the annual directories. The directories are private enterprises. Until 1982 the name was *Thailand's Christian Directory*, and since 1984 *Update Christian Directory*. In the 1990s the name has been *Thailand Christian Directory*.

The Internet is a new source of information. Some of the independent churches in Thailand have opened their homepages on the Internet. In addition to these, the Internet contains various sites, which give information on independent churches in general and in Thailand.

1.5. TERMINOLOGY

Attention must be paid to the Thai terms. Generally, the terminology for expressing doctrinal concerns in Thai is derived from different sources. Many of the terms were invented for their specific purpose; some were taken from secular usage, some from the royal court language; a few were derived from Buddhist practice and terminology. Therefore semantic remarks on the Thai terms must be made.

In ordinary practice, the Thai term for church, *khriſchak*, denotes a local organized church or congregation, sometimes also an unorganized worship group. There is no exact term for an organized denomination, so different terms are used as prefixes to *khriſchak*. The most common is *sapha khriſchak*. In other connections *sapha* is used to denote large official organizations such as the Parliament. In this study *khriſchak* is usually translated church, sometimes congregation. The Church is capitalized when it denotes a denomination or the Church Universal.

The term Protestant is used as a general term as it is used in Thailand as the counterpart to Roman Catholicism. In addition to the historical Reformation Churches it includes also later churches and Christian organizations. The independent churches in Thailand identify themselves as part of the Protestant Christianity without developing a separate identity. The term Evangelical has been used since the nineteenth century for Protestant churches, or movements among the Protestant churches, which emphasize personal conversion experiences and reliance on the Bible as the only basis for Christian faith and conduct.

The Thai terms used in this study are italicized. The transliteration of Thai terms into English varies. Here, transliteration has been used as a guide for pronunciation; if there is a fixed practice for writing some special terms, this has been followed. Thai is a tonal language, but the diacritical tone marks have not been marked. The proper names are written, if possible, in the form the individuals themselves the churches, or the organizations write them. Capitalization has been used only in proper names. Texts translated from Thai by the author have been marked with (T).

Thai people are here addressed either by their first name, accompanied by a title, according to the Thai custom, or by both first name and family name together.

2. THAI SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH IN THAILAND

The purpose in this chapter is to introduce the historical, social, political and theological context in which the independent churches in Thailand are living. Information will be given on the Thai nation and society. A short review of the history of Christianity in Thailand as well as an introduction to the history and contextual setting of the Protestant churches in Thailand will be given. In addition, an introduction to the Protestant churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area will be given. This is necessary because the most dynamic independent churches have their centers in Bangkok.

2.1. THAI SOCIETY

The books written by Thai authors often emphasize the long history of the Thais as an independent and progressive nation. Many of the books written in English attempt, as does Rong Syamananda, to "present a Thai point of view to foreign readers."¹ In many cases this means the view of the national elite. The monarchy, Bangkok, and Central Thailand are thus the centers of interest. Scholars who have been influenced by the radical student movements between 1973 and 1976 have made more critical studies.²

2.1.1. The nation: its history and political structure

¹Rong Syamananda. A History of Thailand. Chulalongkorn University. Thai Watana Panich CO., LTD. Bangkok. Fifth edition 1986. Author's preface, 1-2. The first edition was published in 1971. On the official information see for example: Thailand into the 80's. Copyright by the Office of the Prime Minister, Royal Thai Government. Printed by Thai Watana Panich, Bangkok. 1979, 41, 132. The Thai Prime Minister and His Task. The Government Public Relations Department. Printed by Parpbim Limited Partnership. Bangkok. 1982, 5. This booklet is a Rattanakosin (Bangkok) Bicentennial publication.

²Bibliographies on Thailand have been published. Examples: Philip J. Hughes. Thai Culture, Values, and Religion. An Annotated Bibliography of English Language Materials. Revised Edition. Payap College, Chiang Mai. 1982. Donn V. Hart. Thailand: An Annotated Bibliography of Bibliographies. Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Occasional Paper No. 5. Northern Illinois University. 1977. Hart introduces altogether 204 bibliographies in Thai, English and other languages. On Buddhism there is an annotated bibliography on the Internet: Gateways to Dhamma Study. June, 1999. <http://world.std.com/~metta/pariyatti.htm>. The latest bibliography on Protestantism in Thailand in English language is provided by Herbert Swanson in the Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928. Edited by George Bradley McFarland. Introduction, Commentary and Bibliography by Herbert R. Swanson. White Lotus Press, Bangkok. 1999, lii-lxxxiii. The book was originally published by the Bangkok Times Press Ltd in 1928. The young teachers trained abroad, especially in the USA, exposed the students to new interpretations on Thai society. On the impact of the student movement on studies on Thai society: Charles F. Keyes. Thailand. Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State. Editions Duang Kamol. D.K. Printing House. Bangkok. 1989, 82-85.

Thailand appears to be a culturally homogeneous country. According to government censuses more than 95 percent of the population of Thailand speak Thai. However, if ethnic self-identification is taken into account, the population of Thailand would appear much more ethnically diverse. Over 80 percent of the population speak Thai languages, divided into four main regional language groups: Central, Northern, Northeastern, and Southern Thai. Because Central Thai, earlier called Siamese, is the medium of instruction in schools, and radio and television programs are broadcast almost totally in Central Thai, the vast majority of people are able to communicate in the language. The non-Thai minority groups have been assimilated especially in urban areas. It is possible for people to have distinct identities and still see themselves as Thai. This has led to "situational ethnicity", a term applied especially to urban people with a Chinese background.³

The non-Thai minorities belong to several language groups, and are often presented in three categories. The predecessors of the Thais, namely the Khmers, the Mons and the Malays, have been living in Thailand since pre-historical times. The various "hill tribes" live in the remote mountain areas. The immigrants, mostly Chinese, are recent arrivals living mainly in the urban areas. It has been estimated that the percentage of the ethnic Chinese, including Sino-Thai, could be ten percent of the population. They dominate the economy of the country to a large extent.⁴

Traditionally, Thais have been rural people; only five percent of the population was living in urban areas in 1947. The difference between the urban and rural society was further underlined by the fact that the urban population was largely non-Thai,

³Keyes 1989, 14-18, 73, 134-135. Estimation of the percentage of the ethnic Chinese and Sino Thai is from Keyes. On "situational ethnicity": Reaching the Peoples of Bangkok. Caleb Project. 1605 Elizabeth St, Pasadena, California. 1988, 9, 39-44. James C. Ingram. Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970. Stanford University Press. Stanford California. 1971, 4. The terms Tai or Daic have been used for the group of languages. According to the Governmental practice the term Thai is used for all ethnic groups living in Thailand and speaking languages belonging to the above mentioned family of languages. There is a colloquial term *Thai thae* used for people with pure ethnic Thai background. In narrower sense this is used for Thais of the Central Plains; according to author's observations it is used also for people from other regions. The Northeasterners are to some extent looked down. On the language groups in Southeast Asia: Charles F. Keyes. The Golden Peninsula. Culture and adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia. Macmillan publishing Co., Inc. New York. 1977, 339-341.

⁴Keyes 1989, 16, 18-22, 133-135. Keyes 1977, 16-31. In 1989, the Mons comprised 0.2%, the Khmers 1.5%, and the Malays 3.0% of the population. The estimation for the tribal groups was about 1%. The hill tribes have not been included in Thai national censuses. The combined Non-Thai highland population was estimated by surveys to be 331 300 in mid-1970s. See: Peter Kunstadter. Highland Populations in Northern Thailand. Highlanders of Thailand. Ed. John McKinnon & Wanat Bhruksasri. Oxford University Press. Kuala Lumpur. 1983, 15-18, 28-30. The intermarriages between Thai and Chinese have been common from the early Bangkok period. Girling estimates that half of the bureaucratic elite has some Chinese ancestry. See: John L.S. Girling. Thailand. Society and Politics. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London. 1981, 77.

in particular Chinese. During the twentieth century the whole rural society has gone through profound changes socially, economically, and culturally.⁵

Urbanization has led to the growth of Bangkok. Bangkok is not only an example of the top-heavy population growth. The political and economical power is concentrated in Bangkok. Most of the institutes for higher education and national culture are located there, together with the most important symbols of the monarchy and Buddhism.⁶

In the national tradition, the Thais are presented as an ancient and great race who have been ruling themselves since time immemorial. The history of the Thais in Indochina is usually divided into periods according to the capital cities. During the colonial period, Thailand managed to remain the only sovereign nation in Southeast Asia. In the Thai national tradition, this has been attributed to the kings of the Chakri Dynasty, who with successful diplomacy succeeded in keeping the country independent after some loss of territory. Towards the end of the 19th century, the monarchy became an absolute monarchy.⁷

⁵ Keyes 1989, 13. Keyes 1977, 303. On the economical change in agriculture: Ingram 1971, 220-279. On the cultural change in Northern Thai rural community: Matti Sarmela, Paikalliskulttuurin rakennemuutos. Raportti Pohjois-Thaimaan riisikylistä. Structural Change in Local Culture. The Finnish Anthropological Society. Helsinki. 1979. English summary 323-375. On changes in Southern maritime villages: Olli-Pekka Ruohomäki, Fishermen No More? Livelihood and environment in Southern Thai Maritime Villages. Studies in Contemporary Thailand. No. 8. White Lotus, Bangkok. 1999, 172-200. On structural properties and processes in the religious system of Northeastern Thai rural community: S. J. Tambiah, Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, No 2. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney. 1970. Reprint 1980. The most intensive research on a particular rural community in mainland Southeast Asia was a research carried out between 1948 and 1958 by Sharp, Shanks and associates in Bang Chan village near Bangkok. On social interaction in Central Thai rural community: Herbert P. Phillips, Thai Peasant Personality. The Patterning of Interpersonal Behaviour in the Village of Bang Chan. University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London. 4th Printing 1974. On social history of a Central Thai rural community: Lauriston Sharp and Lucien M. Shanks, Bang Chan. Social History of a Rural Community in Thailand. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London. 1978. For a comprehensive list of the Bang Chan-literature: Keyes 1977, 167-168.

⁶ In 1992, when the population of the country was 57,789,000, the population of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area was 8,661,000. Actually, only in few countries of the world the disparity between the principal city and the secondary cities is as great as it is in Thailand. Key Statistics of Thailand 1994, 6. Thailand into 80's 1979, 215-231. Keyes 1977, 300, 303. Keyes 1989, 13. On economy: Keyes 1989, 151-158. Keyes 1977, 299-313. On political, administrative, and cultural centralization: Keyes 1977, 285-299. Keyes 1989, 169-174. David Morell - Chai-anan Samudavijja, Political Conflict in Thailand. Reform, Reaction, Revolution. Oelgeschlager, Gunn&Hain, Publisher Inc. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1982, 42-50.

⁷ The periods are the period of Sukhothai (1238-1350), the period of Ayutthaya (1350-1767), the period of Thonburi (1767-1782), and the period of Bangkok (1782-present). Rong Syamananda 1986, 7, 11, 12, 22-29, 62- 99, 144. Thailand into 80's 1979, 15, 24, 30-37. On the role of the kings in keeping the country independent according to the national tradition: Abha Bhamobutr, Leading Facts of Thai History. Published by Somsak Rangsiyopas. Distributed by D.K. Today Ltd, Bangkok. 1988, cover page, 97-99. This book is a reprinted English version of a book published in Thai under the name

A *coup d'état* changed the absolute monarchy to a constitutional one in 1932. The Second World War had a profound influence on Thailand, both internally and in its foreign relations. In December 1941, Thailand surrendered to the Japanese and became their ally. A resistance movement against the Japanese called Free Thai (*Seri Thai*) was organized. Thailand has been a member of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) since its founding in 1967. During the Vietnam War Thailand was an ally of the USA.⁸

Economically, Thailand has been developing quickly especially since the 1960s. The urban and rural poor have benefited little from the economical growth; the powerful, wealthy, educated Bangkok elite and the rural and urban masses are increasingly different. Serious environmental problems have surfaced because of negligence of ecological consequences of industrial development. The 1980s and the first part of the 1990s were a time of rapid economical growth. The recession in 1997 had a profound impact not only on the economy, but also on the whole society.⁹

After the 1932 coup, military and military-supported governments have ruled Thailand most of the time until the late 1980s. The change of government by

Prawatsart Thai. The date of the original edition is not given. Rong Syamananda 1986, 131- 145. Chula Chakrabonse, Prince of Thailand, Lords of Life. A History of the Kings of Thailand. Alvin Redman. Second revised edition. London 1967, 200-205, 209, 224, 247- 252. Prince Chula's book can be considered as an apologetic court history of the Chakri dynasty (1782- present) written for foreign readers. Bangkok Bicentennial. 200 Years of the Chakri Dynasty. Presskit. 1982, 2a-4d. In 1982 the bicentennial anniversary of Bangkok was celebrated with grand ceremonies throughout the year. During Ayutthayan period Thailand came into contact with Western powers. According to Chaiyan Rajchagool the absolute monarchy was founded 1873-1892. Before that the power was shared between the King and the nobility. The rise of the absolute monarchy was connected to the development of "peripheral capitalism". See: Chaiyan Rajchagool, The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy. Foundations of the Modern Thai State from Feudalism to Peripheral Capitalism. Studies in Contemporary Thailand. Volume 2. White Lotus. Bangkok. 1994, 1-16, 85-130.

⁸On the events of the 1932 coup: Rong Syamananda 1986, 162-167. Thawat Mocaraphong, History of the Thai Revolution. A Study of Political Behaviour. Thai Wattana Panich, Bangkok. 1983. Second printing. The book is the first major work in English on the 1932 coup written by a Thai national. On the Thai resistance movement: John B Hasemann, The Thai Resistance Movement During the Second World War. Chalermnit Press, Bangkok. Sine Anno (1976?). On ASEAN: Online URL:<http://www.asean.com>. June 2000.

⁹John L.S. Girling, Thailand. Society and Politics. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London. 1981, 99-102, 231-251. Thailand into the 80s, 249-252. Keyes 1989, 111-120. On the investment programs: Ingram 1971, 288-299. On the political implications of the governmental rural development programs: Saiyud Kerdphol, The Struggle for Thailand. Counter-insurgency 1965-1985. S. Research Center Co., Ltd. Bangkok. 1986, 89-94, 237-246. Bangkok Post Economic Review, 1990 Year-End. The Post Publishing Co. Ltd. Bangkok. 11-19, 83-84. On environmental changes in maritime Southern Thailand: O.-P. Ruohomäki, 1999, 12-34. On the politics and environment: Philip Hirsch in Political Change in Thailand. Democracy and Participation. Edited by Kewin Hewinson. Politics in Asia Series. London School of Economics. 1997, 178-194. On the recession: Bangkok Post Yearend Economic Review 1997, Midyear Economic Review 1998. Online URL:<http://www.bkkpost.samart.co.th/>

generally bloodless takeovers has been a prominent feature. The student-led uprising in 1973 forced the military strongmen to give up power, but the movement was suppressed violently in October 1976. After that the governments can not be called military governments as such; however, the support of the military was essential. Since 1978, a gradual opening of the society and the strengthening of democratic processes has taken place. An important example of these changes was the end of the armed insurgency of the Communists in the early 1980s, when an amnesty was granted for those who wanted to return to the society. In spite of these developments, military takeovers have taken place even recently. The latest successful coup was staged in 1991. In May 1992 the military tried to suppress widespread demonstrations by force. Finally, new parliamentary elections were held, and a civilian government was nominated. The military has relinquished most of its political power. In 1997 a new Constitution confirming human rights was promulgated.¹⁰

Between 1958 and 1963, the monarchy re-emerged as the persuasive voice of the nation, because the military government sought legitimacy by turning to the monarchy. Since then, the role of the monarchy has been important in national crisis situations. This has become visible especially during crises in the years 1973 - 1976 and in May 1992.¹¹

¹⁰On the military strongmen: Thailand into 80's, 151-157, Hasemann, 6-7. Morell - Chai-anan Samudavija 1982, 50-69. According to Wedel and Wedel, Pridi Panomyong, a leading figure in the political life from 1932 until the middle of the 1940's, tried "to weave a new economic order out of traditional values, Buddhist philosophy and utopian socialism." Yuangrat Wedel with Paul Wedel. Radical Thought, Thai Mind: The Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Thailand. Assumption Business Administration College. Bangkok. 1987, 47- 66, 195. On description of the coups and military governments: Girling 1981, 105-117. On the political events from 1932 to 1990 and changes within the national elite: Joseph J. Wright, The Balancing Act. A History of Modern Thailand. Distributed by Asia Books. Bangkok. 1991. On the development of the leftist thought and the radical and communist movements: Wedel with Wedel 1987, 164-169. On the student uprising and the political situation 1973-1976 and after: Morell and Chai-anan Samudavija 1982, 149-150, 262- 283, 312-313. Keyes 1989, 100-107. A book commemorating the student uprisings in October 1973 and 1976 was published in 1988 by Thailand Student Union. The book contains reports and interviews and photographs which display uncharacteristic violent behavior of the police and the armed forces. Samutphap Duean Tula. Sahaphan Nisit Naksueksa haeng Prathet Thai, Phak Saengtham, Mahawitthayalai Thammasart. Second edition, 2531 (1988). Annual commentaries on the political events are published in Asia Yearbook. On the peak of the Communist insurgency: Asia 1980 yearbook. Far Eastern Economic Review. Far Eastern Economic Review Limited. Hong Kong, 292. On Government counter-insurgency campaigns: Saiyud Kerdphol 1986. General Saiyud was an initiator in the government counter-insurgency programs. The armed insurgency of the Communists ended by 1985. See also: Tom Marks, Making Revolution. The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective. Studies in Contemporary Thailand. White Lotus, Bangkok. 1994. Abortive coups have taken place in 1981 and 1985. On the 1991-1992 events: Kewin Hewinson and Chai-Anan Samudavija in Political Change in Thailand, 1997, 1-3, 52-57. Catalyst for Change. Uprising in May. Bangkok Post. Bangkok, 1992. 1-116. On the new Constitution: Bangkok Post, Constitution Special. September 1, 1997. September 28, 1997.

¹¹Thailand into the 80's 1979, 150, 153, 156. Keyes 1989, 79- 80, 104-105. Kewin Hewinson in Political Change in Thailand 1997, 58-74. Hewinson deals quite extensively with May 1992 events.

Several ideas are intertwined in the understanding of the monarchy. The originally Hindu idea of divine kingship, received from the Khmers, began to erode during the reign of King Rama IV (Mongkut) (1851-1868). Nevertheless, a special vocabulary, partly same as the one used for the deities, is reserved for the monarchy even at the present. In addition, the king is seen as the upholder of the Buddhist teaching, and as the Father of the Nation.¹²

2.1.2. Social organization

Since the Sukhothai period (1238 - 1378), Thailand has had a pyramidal government structure. The 1932 coup changed the people on the top of the power structure, but not the structure itself.¹³

Thais seldom function in large organizations. The "loose structure" of the Thai society has caused controversy among scholars. Some authors focus on the lack of rigid obligations and voluntary qualities of Thai behavior and derive this from, or associate it with, the Buddhist ethic of personal responsibility. Some researchers, on the other hand, stress the importance of the structures of power and authority because these aspects are clearly visible in the society. An individual's position in the power structure may change, but the structures are persistent. The relationship between the shifting personal choice and the enduring restraints of power is thus ambiguous.¹⁴

Two Thais are almost never equals. The relational older sibling - younger sibling, *phi-nong*, structure is the most important. *Phi* refers to the older sibling regardless of gender. The *phi-nong* concept is applied to friendship relations and to relations with study and work associates as well. In friendship and other relations not restricted to the nuclear family, biological age is not the only factor defining who is *phi* and who is *nong*.¹⁵

¹² Thailand into the 80's 1979, 117-120. Fred W. Riggs, Thailand. Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity. East West Center Press. Second printing. Honolulu. 1967, 91-107. Keyes 1989, 1-5, 31.

¹³ Morell and Chai-anan Samudavija 1982, 19, 25. Rong Syamananda 1986, 20-31

¹⁴ Keyes 1989, 122. Keyes 1977, 163-166. Hasemann, Introduction by Frank C. Darling xvi-xvii. A term "loosely structured society" was employed in the 1950s to explain the behavioral patterns. According to Girling, both looseness and structure can be found in the Thai society; these categories are not mutually exclusive but operate along a continuum. Girling 1981, 40,41. On a review of the different interpretations of the Thai social behavior: Suntaree Komin, Psychology of the Thai People: Values and Behavioral Patterns. Research Center. National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). Bangkok. 1991, 3-20. See also: Niels Mulder, Inside Thai Society. An Interpretation of Everyday Life. Third revised and expanded edition. Editions Duang Kamol. Bangkok. 1990.

¹⁵ On the kinship groups and social behavior: Keyes 1977, 131-136. Norman Jacobs, Social Behaviour. (Modernization without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study. Praeger, New

The Thai society functions on vertical rather than horizontal relations. Especially two terms, "patronage" and "entourage" have been employed to describe the reciprocal relations common in the society. The patron-client structures have been observed in the political party system, in village life, in religious organizations, and in business relations. The Free Thai resistance movement during the Second World War functioned according to this principle as well. The widespread application of the patron-client theory to all areas of social organization has also been criticized.¹⁶

2.1.3. Religion

Since the reign of King Rama VI (Vajiravuth) (1910-1925), Buddhism has been a central symbol of Thai nationalism. According to the 1980 census, 95% of the population were Buddhists; the Muslims comprised 3.8% and the Christians 0.5%. In the national tradition, the Thais are presented as tolerant people, who, in spite of their Buddhism, have granted religious freedom to other faiths in their country. However, this toleration must be qualified; it has not really been tested. The relations with the Muslims have been tense, at times intolerant. Occasionally, Christians have faced problems. In addition, the followers of faiths other than Buddhism have mostly come from the ethnic minorities. Most of the Muslims are from the ethnic Malay or Indian immigrant background. The Chinese and the hill tribes have been more receptive to the Christian Gospel than the ethnic Thais. Despite this, the Christians have emphasized Thai nationalism rather than ethnicity.¹⁷

York. 1971, 89-95.) Reprinted in: Clues to Thai Culture and to Cross Cultural Adjustment, Communication and Innovation. Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Bangkok 1981, 115-119. A. Thomas Kirsch, Notes on Thai Religion (1968). Reprinted in: Clues to Thai Culture and Cross Cultural Adjustment, Communication and Innovation. Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Bangkok. 1981, 129-132.

¹⁶ Roots of the patron-client type of relation have been sought from the pre-modern system, called *sakdi na*, when all subjects were placed under protection of a patron. However, if the clients or followers were not satisfied with the patron they could shift their loyalty to another leader. On the patron client relations during the 19th century: Akin Rabidhadana, The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period 1782-1873. Bhumipanya Foundation & Thai Association of Qualitative Researchers. Bangkok 1996, 1-47, 96-114, 206-222. On entourage interpretation: Komin 1991, 10. On patron-client relations in political and business relations: Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija 1982, 9-11, 59-64, 259. Keyes 1989, 29-31. Girling 1981, 78. On patron-client relations in Central Thai rural community: Sharp and Shanks, 1978, 121-131. Keyes 1979, 154. On Free Thai movement: Hasemann 1976, 94, 97-98. On the critics for applying the patron -client concept to all areas of social organization: Chayan Rachagool 1994, 60-65.

¹⁷ Actually, King Rama IV (Mongkut) and King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) created a state-controlled Buddhism, which was then designated as one of the pillars of Thai nationalism by King Vajiravuth. Keyes 1989, 57-59. The emphasis on the religious toleration is very clear in Prince Chula's court history: Chula Chakrabongse 1967, 77, 86, 173, 181-182, 191, 241, 276. See also Rong Syamananda 1986, 123, 151. On the 1980 census: Keyes 1989, 14.

The missionary aspect is clearly visible in the Thai Buddhism. Collections of Buddha's teachings have been published in English with the aim to distribute them to visitors in Thailand. Writings of the respected monks have been translated into English and other languages. Thai Buddhist authors and Western converts to Buddhism have published writings with an aim to introduce Buddhism to foreigners. Some temples receive foreign visitors to study Buddhism. Some of them have stayed and actually become ordained as novices or monks. In addition, Thai Buddhist temples have been established abroad. These are meant to serve the overseas Thai communities, but also receive local followers.¹⁸

Buddhism has been the agent for both preservation and change in the society. The role of preservation is seen in the close connections of the higher levels of the Buddhist Order, *Sangha*, with the national elite. The state apparatus, specifically the Department for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education, controls it. People promoting Buddhism as an agent for change have relied on the role of Buddhism in the local communities. Traditionally, monks have been serving as counselors in their communities. Buddhist reform movements, like *Suan Mokh*, founded by Buddhadasa Bhikku, and *Santi Asoke*, have been active in advocating social concerns. In addition, local temples have created their own community development programs.¹⁹

Ordination as a monk for a certain period has traditionally been part of the education of the youth. The lay people are not restricted to a certain temple in merit-

There has been only little interaction between the Muslims in the South and the Thai Buddhists. Partly the isolation is self-imposed by the Muslims. On the relations to the Muslim minority: M. Ladd Thomas. The Thai Muslims. The Crescent in the East. Islam in Asia Major. Edited by Raphael Israeli. Curzon Press Ltd: London and Dublin and Humanities Press Inc: Atlantic Highlands, NJ USA. 1982, 156-165. In late 1980s, a certain revival of Muslim self-identity has taken place. Newspapers have carried stories on the some tension between the Muslims and others. See e.g. Bangkok Post. Section Three, September 14, 1988, November 30, 1989. Thailand into the 1980's, 51-54. Keyes 1989, 131-133.

¹⁸Phra Rajavaramuni (Prayud Payutto), Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World A Survey of Buddhist Situation against a Historical Background. Printed by Unity Progress Press, Bangkok. 3rd printing 1985, 112-113, 121-152, 153-170 (Thai temples in the USA). René Gothóni ja Mikael Tenzin Dönden. Bodhipuun juurella. Kokemuksia buddhalaisuustareista. Otava, Helsinki. 1984, 206-252. On the Buddhist symbols and terms: René Gothóni - Mahapanna (Mikael Niinimäki) Buddhalainen sanasto ja symboliikka. Gaudeamus. Helsinki, 1990. The Buddha's Words. The Buddhist Association of Thailand. B.E. 2518 (1976)

¹⁹On the connection of the *Sangha* to the government agencies see for example. Kenneth E Wells. Thai Buddhism. Its Rites and Activities. Suriyabun Publishers. Bangkok. 1975, 1-3, 7-12. Seri Phongphit. Religion in a Changing Society. Buddhism, Reform and the Role of Monks in Community Development in Thailand. Arena Press. Hong Kong. 1988, 6-11, 13-19. Seri Phongphit 1988, 44-134 describes community development programs connected to local temples. On the monks as advisers in the society: Wells 1975, 263. On Santi Asoke: Marja-Leena Heikkilä-Horn, Santi Asoke Buddhism and Thai State Response. Åbo Akademi University Press. 1996.

making ceremonies. Competing urban Buddhist movements have developed since 1960, especially in Bangkok. *Santi Asoke* and *Dhammakaya* have been in conflict with the official leadership of the *Sangha*.²⁰

The *Sangha* has avoided direct involvement in political affairs. The years prior to 1976 are an exception to the rule: some of the monks openly supported and even participated in the leftist movements. These groups were highly personalized and functioned only for a short time. Another exception is Kitthiwutho Bhikku, who supported the extreme right and the use of violence.²¹

²⁰Keyes 1989, 137-139. Peter A Jackson, *Buddhism, Legimation and Conflict*. The Political Functions of Urban Thai Buddhism. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. 1989, 115-119. On Santi Asoke's conflict with the Sangha and the State: Heikkilä-Horn 1996, 7-16, 60-67.

²¹Somboon Suksamran, *Buddhism and Politics in Thailand. A Study of Socio-political Change and Political Activism of the Thai Sangha*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Singapore. 1982, 83-90, 92-96.

2.2. HISTORY OF THE CHURCH UNTIL THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In this short review of the history of the Protestant churches in Thailand until the Second World War, the emphasis is on growth patterns and the development of the church structures. References will be made to doctrinal questions relevant to this study.

The 150th Anniversary of Protestant Christianity in Thailand was celebrated in 1978, commemorating the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries in Thailand in 1828. The permanent work of the Roman Catholic Church can be traced to 1662. The first community of Catholics consisted of the descendants of Portuguese mercenaries. Later the converts were mostly Chinese or other Asian foreigners living in Thailand. Christians form about 0.5% of the population of Thailand. In 1978, the Protestant community was 59,000 and the Catholic community was 189,600. In 1998, the Protestant membership (Table 8.) was estimated to be 174,800 and the Catholic membership (Table 2.) as 253,000.²²

Only a very cursory review to the development of the Roman Catholic Church is given. The Catholic and Protestant communities have had few contacts with each other. The indirect influence of the history of the Roman Catholic Church is important, because the Roman Catholics have been involved in several controversies with national, political, and religious aspects. The results of these controversies have also affected the Protestants. The distinctiveness is reflected also in terminology. The term *khristian* derived from English is used for Protestants, while the term *khristang* is used exclusively for Catholics. Term *khristachon* is used when referring to the Catholics and Protestants together. There have been attempts to create a common Thai theological terminology, but this has proved difficult since different theological concepts have influenced the terminology.²³

²²Thailand in Transition: The Church in a Buddhist Country. Pro Mundi Vita 48. International Research and Information Center, Amsterdam. 1973, 17. Alex G. Smith, Siamese Gold. A History of Church Growth in Thailand: An Interpretative Analysis 1816-1982. Kanok Bannasan, Bangkok. 1982, 13-15, 265-267. Update Christian Directory 1989-1990. Update Interdenomination Ltd. Part, Bangkok. 1989, 2. Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of the Expansion of the Christianity, Vol VI The Great Century. Harper & Brothers Publisher. New York and London. 1944, 241 -246.

²³Until the 1980s, the Thailand Bible Society was almost the only place where co-operation between the Catholics and the Protestants took place. Occasional contacts have taken place. In 1971, a theological dictionary was published by a committee comprising of Protestant and Catholic theologians. Pramuasap sasanasart lae prachaya. Suriyaban, Phranakorn. 1971. The Protestant writers have often neglected their Roman Catholic contemporaries and vice versa. See: Smith 1982, XXIV. In 1990 a newspaper called Thai Mission began to be published as a joint project of Catholics and some Protestants. In 1998, Prasith Pongudorm of the Office of the History of the CCT, wrote a history of the Catholic Church in Thailand in Thai. Prasith Pongudom, Superstition. Prawatsart Khatholik nai Prathet Thai samai Ayutthaya thueng Krung Rattanakosin. Fai prawatsart Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai. Chiang Mai, 1998. Chapap rang krang thi 2. 1988. (Second draft).

A practical example of the different terminology: The documents of the Second Vatican Council have been translated in Thai. I asked the second and third year students at the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education to make a short report on the themes discussed in the Council. One of the

During the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688), Constantine Phaulkon, a Greek adventurer who had converted to the Roman Catholic Church, rose to a very prominent position in the Thai court. The King gave French missionaries large freedom to act, and the Catholics hoped to convert him. The King cultivated friendly relations to France, apparently in order to counterbalance the British and Dutch influence. A party was formed against the growing French influence, and after King Narai's death a violent suppression of Christianity took place.²⁴

Some later controversies were more religious in nature. During the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851), a Roman Catholic priest issued a catechism titled *Questions and Answers*. It was considered to insult Buddhism, and its publication was prohibited. In 1958, another catechism was published, again considered insulting. Inspired by the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholics in Thailand employed a new approach around 1965 by adopting Buddhist terms such as *sangharaja*, *wat*, and *phra* for bishop, church building, and priest respectively. This created a strong protest among some Buddhists in 1983: they accused the Catholics for mixing Buddhism and Catholicism in order to win larger following. Since then there have been no public conflicts.²⁵

The Roman Catholic Church in Thailand is divided into ten dioceses, of which Bangkok is the largest with a membership of 58 747 in 1978.²⁶

students who has been a Christian for many years told that making a proper report would take a long time. Terminology used in the documents was so different from the terminology used by the Protestants that understanding the content of the documents would not be possible without a translation (explanation of the central terms).

²⁴W.A.R. Wood, A History of Siam. From the earliest times to the year 1781 with a supplement dealing with more recent events. Chiang Mai 1924. Repr. Chalermit Press, Bangkok, 198-217. Rong Syamananda 1986, 71-83. David K. Wyatt. Thailand. A Short History. Yale University Press & Trasvin Publications, Chiang Mai. 1984, 112-118.

²⁵Ven. Phra Sobhon-Ganabhorn. A Plot to Undermine Buddhism. Siva Phorn Limited Partnership, Bangkok. 1984, 1-6. The booklet was originally written in Thai in January 1983. Within one year 130,000 copies were distributed and in 1984 it was translated into English.

²⁶Smith 1982, 267. Thailand in Transition, 1973, 19, 21, 22. Kenneth Scott Latourette. A History of the Expansion of Christianity. Vol VII. Advance Through Storm. AD 1914 and after with concluding Generalizations. Harper & Brothers Publisher. New York and London. 1945, 324-325. Latourette gives 24 000 as the size of the community in 1912. In 1992 the National Statistical Office gave the number of Christians as 315,550. The number of Protestants was estimated as 146,800 in 1990 (Table 8). This would leave only roughly 165, 000 for the Catholic community. Key Statistics of Thailand 1994, 60.

Table 2. Membership of the Roman Catholic Church in Thailand

1785	1,372
1881	3,000
1914	23,000
1933	36,000
1970	152,112
1978	189,609
1995	253,000

Sources: Smith 1982, 267. Thailand in Transition 1973, 19-22. World Churches Handbook 1997, 812

2.2.1. Protestant mission beginnings and the pioneer missions until 1850

The history of the Protestant churches in Thailand can be divided into different periods. It seems to be commonly accepted that the Second World War was a turning point. Dividing the pre- Second World War era into more detailed periods seems to be difficult. According to the *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828 -1928* the pioneer period lasted until 1860. I will roughly follow here periods presented by Alex Smith in 1982. This division is based on the growth patterns of the churches.²⁷

In many early mission efforts the primary interest was in China. During the first decades of missionary work in Thailand, the mobility of the missionaries was high; the number of missionaries present in the country was small. The mobility was caused partly by transfers, partly by health problems. Both infant and adult mortality was high.²⁸

²⁷Wells, Smith, and Prasit Pongudom treat the post-war years as a definite period. See: Kenneth E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand 1828 - 1958. Church of Christ in Thailand. Bangkok, 1958. Smith 1982 Prasith Pongudom, Prawatsat Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai, Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai. Krungthep 1984, 68-70. (History of the CCT). Historical Sketch... 1999, 1-50.

²⁸There is a possibility, that already during the Ayutthayan period there has been a Protestant church in Ayutthaya City. Rev. Chanachit Itsamanyee, the pastor of the Samyan Church of the 6th District of the CCT told me in June 1999 that there are sources in Thai that indicate the existence of a Dutch congregation, possibly including local people as members. These sources are translations of foreign literary sources. Some references to Christianity are made e.g: Prawat karn kha Thai. Khunawijitmatra. Nangsue suanjamkat bamrungsan. Rongphim Bandit karn phim. Phim khrang thi 4. 2516/1973, 191, 192. These references are not clear enough to conclude for certain that there has been organized Protestant church in Ayutthaya. The first Protestant missionary known to work with the Thai (Siamese) was Mrs. Ann Hasseltine Judson, in Burma 1813-1826, among the Siamese prisoners of war in Rangoon and Moulmein. Smith 1982, 12-13. When Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson arrived in Bangkok in 1858, the Presbyterians and the Baptists both had two couples and the American Missionary Society had one couple of missionaries in Bangkok. Wells 1958, 49-50. Smith records deaths of five Baptist missionaries prior to 1851. Infant mortality was high, definite statistics are not available. Smith 1982, 20-21, 29.

The first resident missionaries in Thailand were Karl Gützlaff, a German Lutheran, and Jacob Tomlin, both of the London Missionary Society. They arrived in Bangkok in 1828, and initiated translations of the Gospels and the Romans. Gützlaff left for China in 1831. Tomlin finally left the country in 1832.²⁹

The American Baptist Mission sent its first missionaries to Thailand in 1833. The Chinese proved more receptive. In 1837, eight missionaries and three Chinese members organized the Maitrichit Church, the first Chinese church in Asia. In 1893, the work of the Baptist Mission was practically closed for sixty years. The ministry of the Maitrichit Church has continued to the present.³⁰

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission had missionaries in Bangkok in the years 1831-1832 and 1834-1849. The mission was a joint organization of the American Presbyterians and the New England Congregationalists. The conservative Presbyterians, dissatisfied with the growth of liberal tensions among New England Congregationalists, split with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission in 1837 to form their own Mission. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (American Presbyterian Mission) has continued its ministry in Thailand since 1840. The work started on a permanent basis in 1847.³¹

The ministry of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission was disbanded in 1849. Several factors led to the closing of the work; one of them was a doctrinal disagreement between the Board and Dan Beach Bradley and Jesse Caswell. The Board censored these two for adopting views of extreme holiness or sinless perfection. In 1850, the Board handed its Siam Mission over to the American Missionary Association, which Bradley and Caswell had joined.³²

²⁹Wells 1958, 5-7. Smith 1982, 15-19. Historical Sketch... 1999-1-9.

³⁰Smith 1982, 18-19, 21, 42, 45. Wells 1958, 20-21. Carl E. Blanford, Chinese Churches in Thailand. Suriyaban Publisher. Bangkok, 1975. 2-34. The American Baptist Mission re-entered Thailand in 1952. The Maitrichit Church is currently the main church in the 12th District of the CCT.

³¹Smith 1982, 26, 64, 188, 221, 223. Wells 1958, 22, 191.

³²Smith 1982, 23-26, 42. Wells 1958, 8-15. The American Missionary Society, supported by the Congregationalists, continued its work in Thailand until 1874. Bradley continued in Thailand until his death in 1873 supporting him self with printing. His name is connected with the first press, first modern surgery and first successful vaccination against small pox in Thailand. Bradley severed his relations to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission and joined the American Missionary Association (AMA) while on furlough in America in 1847-1849. From 1856 on the financial support from the AMA for the ministry in Thailand was nominal. See: Donald C. Lord, Mo Bradley and Thailand. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids. 1969, 128 – 146.

2.2.2. The period of struggle 1851 - 1883

King Rama IV (Mongkut) (1851-1868) was a leader of the revivification of Buddhism. Nonetheless, he was sympathetic towards Christian missionaries. The three decades after 1851 were a period of the development of mission stations. In 1861, the Presbyterians opened their first mission station outside the capital in Petchaburi, eighty kilometers south of Bangkok.³³

The Presbyterian ministry in Northern Thailand was organized as an independent Laos Mission. In 1867, the first missionaries, Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson, arrived in Chiang Mai with their families. The beginning was promising, because the first converts were men who already had a secure place in society, and the interest towards the new faith was notable. In 1869, a serious disaster met the Christians. Chao Muang Kawilrot, the territorial king, was afraid that Christianity might get too large a following and therefore decided to suppress it quickly. Two of the converts were killed.³⁴

The death of the two converts caused several changes. In the beginning, many of the converts were well established in society. After 1869, the majority of the converts came from the lower echelons of the society and may have converted for social rather than spiritual reasons. The relationship between the Christian community and missionaries changed. The prestige and status of the missionaries grew in the society in northern Thailand; in fact, they became the patrons of the Christians. The churches grew slowly in a social situation that discouraged growth. The indigenous leadership was not developed; the early plans to train the candidates for ordination were abandoned for a long period of time.³⁵

2.2.3. The period of expansion 1884-1914

During three decades, 1884-1914, the church grew rapidly in the North. In Central Thailand, the membership of the Presbyterian Siam Mission remained small until 1905 and then began to grow slowly. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Presbyterian Mission became the major mission agency in Thailand. This was because the Baptists were phasing out of their work and new mission agencies did

³³Smith 1982, 33-35, 56-64. Chula Chakrabongse 1967, Appendix. Rong Syamananda 1986, 100-145. Wells 1958, 50-53.

³⁴Wells 1958, 53-58. Smith 1982, 64,68. Herbert R. Swanson, Khrischak Muang Nua. A Study in Northern Thai Church History. Chuan Printing Press. Bangkok. 1984, 18.

³⁵Swanson 1984, 12, 18-20. According to Smith, many of the converts after 1869 were employed by the missionaries or had been patients in the mission hospital. Smith 1982, 64, 68-72. Wells 1958, 53-58.

not enter Thailand before the beginning of the twentieth century. Even then the number of their missionaries remained low.³⁶

Two phenomena, the self-reliance experiment and the emergence of the regional church - pattern began during this period. These phenomena have had a profound influence on the development of the whole Protestant community, and especially the Church of Christ in Thailand.

After 1890, the "Indigenous Church Principles" of John Nevius, developed in China in the 1880s and tested in Korea, became known among missionaries in Thailand. In general, the Thai Christians showed little interest in self-support when the experiment started in 1894. The missionary body was divided, and the national workers protested. Finally the old system of mission-paid evangelists was reinstated. Later authors evaluate the experiment as a failure. The growth of the church slackened. The experiment was obviously carried out without sufficient preparation, unsystematically and inconsistently. The principles were not understood properly, either. The experiment centered only on one of the principles, economic self-reliance; the other principles, self-propagation and self-government, were not brought into the experiment.³⁷

During this period the basic emphasis was on establishing mission stations. Usually these included educational institutes, hospitals and a chapel. The evangelism was carried out by itinerant preachers – either missionaries or mission-paid evangelists. The missionaries became more and more connected with institutional work.³⁸

In the North, a church structure Swanson calls "the regional church" emerged. The itinerant preaching created a geographically scattered conglomerate church. Travelling missionaries and evangelists carried the pastoral duties. The local

³⁶Smith 1982, 26, 64, 73, 188, 221, 223. Wells 1958, 22, 191.

³⁷Smith 1982, 106-108. Swanson 1984, 94-103. Smith deals with the developments in the South and in the North; Swanson writes on the Laos Mission (the North). Smith apparently follows Donald McGavran's evaluation of the indigenous church principles. See Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth. Fully revised. William B Erdman's Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Reprinted 1982, 373-391. According to Swanson the Laos Mission never applied the "Nevius Plan" in any systematic way although its principles did influence some of the actions of the Mission. The rationale behind the self-support as pursued by the Mission and outlined by Nevius were quite different. Where Nevius emphasized self-support in all facets of church life and especially in Christian education and the Bible, the Laos Mission saw self-support only as a matter of finances.

³⁸Example: In 1909, ten of the missionaries of the Laos Mission were assigned to medical work, ten to educational work, and six were on furlough; only five missionaries had church and evangelistic work as their primary assignment. Swanson 1984, 92-128. A similar trend can be seen also in the assignments in 1903. See Wells 1958, 90-92. It should be noted, however, that many of the missionaries took part in the evangelism and church work on part-time basis. Wells gives an detailed account on the beginnings of the mission stations both in the North and in the South. Wells 1958, 92-128.

leadership was not developed. The elders sometimes functioned as *de facto* pastors, but without proper training.³⁹

Swanson looks critically upon the itinerant evangelism. According to him, the expansionist strategy, of which the itinerant evangelism was a part, was the main weakness of the Laos Mission together with the priority given to institutions. Smith, on the other hand, gives high value to itinerant evangelism. He considers it the opposite of institutional work. He praises men like Daniel McGilvary in Chiang Mai and Eugene P. Dunlap in Petchaburi, who traveled extensively and founded churches instead of mission stations.⁴⁰

Smith's statements about itinerant evangelism have much value. In Phetchaburi, the movement toward Christianity was halted because of the drastic change in the mission policy. In the North, the matter was more complex. It may be correct to say that the reason for the emergence of the regional church was not itinerant evangelism as such, but the failure to localize the work and create local leadership.⁴¹

2.2.4 The period of retarded growth, the establishment of the Church of Christ in Thailand and the campaigns of Dr. John Sung: 1914-1941

After 1914, the dynamic growth was interrupted. Between 1914-1940 the church grew 0.7% per year, less than the expected biological growth of the Christian community. The loss of communicant membership almost equaled the accession through baptism. However, there were groups of receptive people, which were more or less neglected. Most of the Christians lived in the North.⁴²

Before the Second World War, some new mission organizations arrived in Thailand. Strategically, they were similar to the Presbyterians, but operated on a

³⁹Swanson 1984, 105-108.

⁴⁰Swanson 1984, 106-107. Smith 1982, 96. For Dunlap, see: Smith 1982, 61-63, 95-97, 105-106. For McGilvary see Smith 1982, 77-91. Smith obviously reflects also his own experience in Uthai Thani in Central Thailand. See Alex G. Smith, Strategy to Multiply Rural Churches. A Central Thailand Case Study. OMF Publishers, Bangkok. 1977, 229-235.

⁴¹Dunlap left Phetchaburi in 1888. The missionary in charge after him, Rev. William McClure pursued a policy which was called a policy of a "clean church". The purpose was to discontinue the aid, sometimes financial, given to the Christians and enforce strict church discipline. "At the heart of the differences between Dunlap and McClure stood the question of how to conform new Christians to the missionary understanding of the Christian life and thus maintain a clean church." See: Herbert R. Swanson, Towards a Clean Church. A Case Study in 19th Century Thai Church History. Office of History. Church of Christ in Thailand. 1991. 1-26. Quote from page 22.

⁴²Smith 1982, 145-147. Smith describes five potential people movements, which were halted. Smith 1982, 150-154.

much smaller scale. The growth of their work was slow. Their combined membership was approximately 1 200 in 1940.⁴³

The *coup d'état* in 1932 that overthrew the absolute monarchy, growing anxiety over Japan's military expansion in the Asian mainland, and especially the economic depression in America, increased the pressure to indigenize the work. The number of missionaries as well as funds received from abroad decreased. In the process to indigenize, the missionaries took the initiative; the national Christians generally did not show much enthusiasm.⁴⁴

The new national Church, initially called the Church of Christ in Siam, and later the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), was established in its first General Assembly in April 1934. Only the Presbyterian churches and the Chinese Baptist churches joined. The local Presbyterian Thai churches were grouped into six geographical districts, and the Chinese churches formed the Seventh District.⁴⁵

The growth of the membership of the Protestant churches in Thailand until the Second World War is presented in Table 3.⁴⁶

Table 3. Membership of the Protestant churches in Thailand until the Second World War.

	1870	1880	1890 (1892)	1900 (1902)	1910 (1914)	1920	1930	1940
APM/CCT								
-South	30*	150*	302	323	821	----	----	----
-North	5	85	1376	2929	6934	----	----	----
Total	----	----	----	----	----	8036	8584	9399
Others	60	500	100	200	400	700	1200	1200
Total	95	735	1678	3452	8155	8730	9784	10599

* Estimations from a graph.

Sources: Smith 1982, 45, 52, 59, 63, 67, 73, 93, 142, 148, 158, 193, 194. Blanford 1975, 33,34. Wells 1958, 89. CCT refers here to the American Presbyterian Mission and to the

⁴³Smith1982, 188-190. Wells 1958, 195-196, 199-201. George Heckendorf, A Church Growth Survey: An Accurate Picture of the Gospel Church in Thailand. Number MC 501. Fuller Theological Seminary. Seminar paper. Mimeograph. 1983, 16.

⁴⁴Smith 1982, 181-183. Wells 1958, 138-144. The number of the Presbyterian missionaries was 107 in 1915, and 68 in 1939. Wells 1958, 92. Prasith Pongudom, 1984, 68-70.

⁴⁵Wells 1958, 144. The largest of the Baptist churches was the Maitrichit Church.

⁴⁶Smith 1982, 92, 214. The figures in Table 3 are given for the communicant membership. However, in some graphs found in literature, the same figures are also used for the baptized membership. Smith presents the development of the membership in graph form, but does not always give the exact numbers on which the graphs are based. For this reason some of the figures in Table 3 are estimations from the graphs presented by Smith. Smith attempts to correct some contradicting information given on the membership. Wells 1958. Blanford 1975.

Church of Christ in Thailand (established 1934). In 1861 the American Presbyterian Mission had 6 members and the others 20 members, all in Bangkok.

The new Church had many problems in its beginning. Although the work had gone on for more than a hundred years, the new national church was not ready to stand on its own.

Several factors can be pointed out. First, the spiritual condition of the church was a cause of concern. The growth had stagnated after 1914. More serious than the slow increase of the membership was that the membership was unstable. New converts were coming to the church, but simultaneously old members were leaving. Establishing the national Church did not change the trend. On the contrary, the membership fell from 9,421 in 1935 to 8,408 in 1937.⁴⁷

Secondly, the leadership of the Church was not developed. The priority given by the mission to institutions had left the local churches weak, and capable men were transferred from the churches to institutions. In 1935, the CCT had 60 organized local churches and 29 ordained ministers. More than half of the churches were led by lay leaders or elders. The main problem was that they were not adequately trained. The local groups of Christians were scattered in the villages without adequate continuous pastoral care. The regional character, mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3, thus weakened the church.⁴⁸

Thirdly, institutions run by the American Presbyterian Mission were large. The number of national employees had grown all the time. In 1936, when the communicant membership was 9,062, the Mission and the Church had 433 employed workers. Smith states that the mission schools and hospitals were mostly self-supported. These institutions remained under the control of the Mission.⁴⁹

Fourthly, the CCT was not economically self-reliant. The mission continued to pay the salaries of the evangelist and pastors. In 1940, 12 of the 68 organized churches were self-supporting, including four Chinese churches in Bangkok.⁵⁰

It is justified to state that the CCT was spiritually, administratively, and economically weak during its first years. Both Swanson and Smith, from different

⁴⁷Smith 1982, 183, 196-198

⁴⁸Smith 1982, 179-180. According to Wells, the McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai had special short courses for rural pastors, elders and colporteurs, but he does not give information on the content of the courses or the enrollment. Wells 1958, 157. Apparently, no comprehensive plan for training the lay leaders was made. A short summary of the early efforts to arrange theological training is given by Roderick Gillies. According to Swanson, Gillies omits some notable efforts. See: Historical Sketch... 1999, xlii, 227-233

⁴⁹Smith 1982, 180-181.

⁵⁰Ibid., 180-184, 212.

theological frameworks, point to policies and actions of the American Presbyterian Mission as the reasons for the weaknesses of the CCT.

In 1938 and 1939 Dr. John Sung, a Chinese evangelist, conducted evangelistic campaigns in Thailand. The campaigns had profound influence on the Protestant churches. Because the campaigns became an integral part of the process of establishing the first independent churches, the campaigns and their influence will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.3. PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN THE BANGKOK METROPOLITAN AREA

In this section, the Protestant churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area are introduced. The interest is in the patterns of growth and expansion. This introduction to the metropolitan churches is necessary, because the most dynamic independent churches are located in Bangkok. They have also been interacting with other churches in Bangkok. In 1986, Phairoj Napawan published a survey of the Protestant churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area giving information on their membership, growth, finances, administration, and activities. There were 105 churches in Bangkok in 1984, nine for expatriates.⁵¹

A list of the Protestant local churches, compiled from directories and membership statistics of various churches, is presented as Appendix 2. It presents the names and the addresses of the churches, including both organized churches and unorganized worship groups. The churches are presented in the four categories recognized by the Department for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education. Because the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand is a co-operative organization of mission organizations and churches, not a denomination, the churches related to it are further divided into categories according to their affiliation. By 1990, the number of churches had grown to 126 and to more than 180 in 1997, if the daughter churches of the independent churches are counted separately.

2.3.1. Growth and expansion

Growth and expansion of the Protestant churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area can be divided into four periods. Table 4 presents the churches classified by the age. The table is a direct quote from Phairoj Napawan.

⁵¹*Phairoj Napawan, Khomun samruad saphap khrischaknai Krungthep. Khana kammakarn sangsoerm karn prakat khong khrischak nai K.T.M.* 1986, Introduction page 3. Update Christian Directory 1987-1988. 1987, 51.

Table 4. Protestant local churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area classified by the year of establishment.

	Number of churches	Percent
1837-1900	3	3.80
1901-1935	6	7.59
1936-1945	--	--
1946-1955	4	5.07
1956-1965	9	11.39
1966-1975	14	17.72
1976-1985	43	54.43
Total	79	100.00

Source: Phairoj Napawan 1986, 5.

The first period covers the time since the beginning of the Protestant work until the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. The work began in Bangkok, and until 1861, it was the only place where permanent work was carried out. The Protestant community grew slowly without drastic changes. By the beginning of the Second World War, there were, in addition to the ministries to the Western communities, nine local churches in Bangkok. Most of these belonged to the Church of Christ in Thailand. The number of Christians was between 800 and 900. In 1938, a revival began especially among the Chinese churches.⁵²

The time of the Japanese occupation during the Second World War (1941-1945) can be seen as the second distinctive period in the growth patterns of Protestant churches in Bangkok. During the occupation, the Christian work was seriously thrown into disorder in the whole country. To some extent, the situation varied. The Chinese churches in Bangkok were active during the war years; the pastors remained in charge, and obviously the membership grew.⁵³

The years 1945-1970 can be seen as the third period. The first post-war years were a time of restoration especially in the North. This recovery touched the Thai churches of the CCT in Bangkok only little. The Chinese churches of the CCT were growing during the whole period; the strong congregations were getting stronger and the

⁵²Smith 1982, 21, 49, 57, 147, 189, 228. It is difficult to get the exact number of Christians in 1940. According to Smith, the CCT statistics inform the membership of the Bangkok Thai churches to be 600 in 1938. This must be an error, because for 1935 the membership was 373. Further he informs that in 1940, the Chinese Saphan Luang Church and the Sathorn Church had altogether 381 members, which was more than the combined membership of the Thai churches. See: Smith 1982, 211, 228. The Maitrichit Church had about hundred members. Smith 1982, 194. Seventh-Day Adventists had altogether 150 members in Thailand; two churches in Bangkok, one in Hadyai in the South. Smith 1982, 189, 212. There were three Chinese churches of the CCT in Bangkok when the CCT was organized in 1934. Blanford 1975, 51-52.

⁵³Paul A. Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok. Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. 1946, 2. Smith 1982, 210-211.

weak remained static. Since the middle of the 1950s, some expansion took place, but the strategies of the earlier times were still employed.⁵⁴

In 1952, there were fourteen local churches in Bangkok. After that, the Maitrichit Church began to plant new churches with the help of the American Baptist Mission, which had re-entered the country. The missionaries were working mainly in the countryside; the expansion in Bangkok was due to the Maitrichit Church. These churches form the present Twelfth District of the CCT.⁵⁵

New missions began to come to Thailand after the Second World War. Most of these began work outside Bangkok. One of the first to take serious interest in church-planting in Bangkok was the Thailand Baptist Mission (Southern Baptists) which entered Thailand in 1949. At the present it is co-operating with the Thailand Baptist Association.⁵⁶

The fourth period, the years since 1970, is characterized by a search for new strategies of expansion. It is impossible to give any definite date when the change began, but after 1970, new strategies began to emerge, and the planting of new churches became quicker. According to Appendix 2, only roughly 30 churches have been established before 1970. This means that more than 150 churches have been established between 1970 and 1997. Most of the expansion since 1970 has taken place among new missions which entered Thailand after 1960, and among the independent churches.

Co-operative consultations on evangelism have been held since 1964, and the Thailand Church Growth Committee was initiated in 1971. It continued to function until the middle of the 1980s. The Church Committee for Bangkok Evangelization was organized in 1982. The Protestant Churches Co-ordination Committee has been functioning since the late 1980s.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Blanford 1975, 35, 53-55, 77. Wells 1958, 182. Smith 1982, 210-211, 217-218, 228, 230. In 1948, the Saphan Luang Church had 374 members, the total for the district was 889 (including the Maitrichit Church). In 1977, the corresponding figures were 1206 for the Saphan Luang Church and 1982 for the whole District. The Sathorn Church had 155 members in 1948, and 326 in 1973. The Maitrichit Church had 178 members in 1948, and 739 in 1974.

⁵⁵Blanford 1975, 35. Ronald C. Hill, Bangkok: An Urban Arena. Foreign Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention. Nashville, Tennessee. 1982, 40, 93. The American Baptist Mission re-entered Thailand in 1952.

⁵⁶Hill 1982, 36-39. This book is a report on the Bangkok Urban Strategy of the Thailand Baptist Mission written for American readers. Its first missionaries were former missionaries to China and their first immediate target group was the Chinese. Very soon they also began to reach out to the Thai population.

⁵⁷ Smith 1982, 223-226. Phairoj Napawan 1986, Intr. page 1. In addition to Phairoj Napawan's work, a directory on various Christian institutions in Bangkok was published by the Church Committee for Bangkok Evangelization.

The 1980s and the 1990s were a period of developing national denominations. Ministry was no longer directed by the mission organizations but by the national bodies. Three of the new missions, which began their ministries in Bangkok, should be noted: the Assemblies of God Field Fellowship Thailand; the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada; and the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. The local churches established by these missions have been organized as denominations: Thailand Assemblies of God, the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. The mission organizations continue to cooperate with the national bodies.⁵⁸

In the 1980s, some of the missions, which began their ministry in rural provinces, also began to form strategies for urban evangelism. Most systematically this has been done by the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Overseas Missionary Fellowship.⁵⁹

The expansion of the churches should be compared with the growth of the city. The proportion of the Protestant community has grown in comparison with Bangkok's population growth.⁶⁰

⁵⁸All of these are working outside Bangkok as well, but their ministry began in Bangkok.

⁵⁹Christian and Missionary Alliance, Bangkok Church Planting Project 1987-1997. Project Paper, 1987. The project of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship started in 1979. See: Geoff Case, How to eat an Elephant. East Asia Millions. Overseas Missionary Fellowship. London. Feb/March 1981, 4-5. By 1987, three churches were established. Church Planting and Development. OMF Office, May 1986. The Finnish Free Foreign Mission has also increased its work in Bangkok. Its main working areas have been in the North, in recent years also in the Northeast.

⁶⁰Keyes 1977, 300. Phairoj Napawan 1986, 3. Statistics of the National Statistical Office. Quoted in Update Christian Directory 1985-1986, 37. Hill 1982, 93. Hill refers to a report of the Department for Religious Affairs, which states that 1.51% of Bangkok's population are Christians; it would mean 55 800 Catholics and 16 700 Protestants in Bangkok. Phairoj Napawan 1986, 11, found only about 13 000 national Protestants in 1984. These figures indicate that a fair number of people consider themselves as Christians, but are not registered as members in any church in Bangkok.

	1947	1984
Population	782,000	5,018,327
Number of local churches	9	105
Number of Christians	1,000 est.	12,962
Population per church	86,900	47,800
Christians % of population	0.13	0.26

Hill refers to estimations that Christian movement is growing faster in Bangkok than in other parts of the country. However, at least the experiences of the Lutherans demonstrate, that the growth is quicker in the Northeast than in Bangkok. See: Annual membership statistics of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Documents for annual General Assemblies.

2.3.2. The denominations and the size of the local churches

In the 1980s, lists of local churches arranged by affiliation were not available. Different kinds of lists did exist, but these were arranged either by location or more or less randomly. For example, in Phairoj Napawan's survey, the list of the churches was started according to affiliation, but then some churches were added in an apparently random order. This could be seen as symptomatic of the understanding about the church. It indicates that the local churches were seen as autonomous bodies, and any co-operation between them was seen as a more or less voluntary enterprise.⁶¹

A change has taken place in the 1990s. In the Christian Directories the local churches are presented according to their affiliations, but also according to the provinces where the churches are located. However, lists for local churches arranged by affiliation and province are not yet available.

In order to have an overall view of the Protestant churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, I prepared in 1990 a list of the local churches arranged by affiliation. Later the list was complemented to correspond with the situation in 1997. This list is presented as Appendix 2. The Appendix 2 may contain discrepancies; the situation fluctuates so it is not possible to have an exact list. There may be several different names used for a same church. In some cases, the English and Thai names do not correspond. The English name used by the church itself is used as the proper name in this study; other names are placed in brackets. The addresses are necessary to distinguish between churches with identical or similar names, but the addresses may not be up to date. The churches, especially the new emerging ones, often move their locations. They may also change their names. The year of establishment the church is given, if available.

Table 5. summarizes the information given in Appendix 2. Information from 1990 as well as from 1997 is given in order to highlight the changes that have taken place in the 1990s. In spite of the uncertainties mentioned above, the following observations can be made. Expansion has taken place in most of the denominations. The largest expansion has taken place among the independent churches and churches classified in Appendix 2 as other EFT registered churches. The other EFT registered churches are local churches that belong to denominations or mission organizations, which mainly work in other provinces but have established one or two congregations in Bangkok, or local churches that have been established by independent missionaries or smaller mission agencies. Part of the growth of this category could be due to the increase of information. These churches may have existed already in 1990 but were not yet registered. The daughter churches of the independent churches have not been counted in the number of churches in Table 5.⁶²

⁶¹ Phairoj Napawan, 1986, 59-66.

⁶² The figures in the list prepared in 1990: Mäkelä 1993, 198-203.

Table 5. Protestant churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area

	Number of churches 1990	Number of churches 1997
Church of Christ in Thailand	29	35
Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand		
-Evang. Lutheran Church in Thail.	9	10
-Korea Presbyterian Mission	3	1
-Gospel Church of Thailand	6	8
-Philippines Ass. of Bapt. for World Ev.	3	--
-Associated Churches in Thailand	3	12
-Korea Global Mission	2	4
-Full Gospel Churches in Thailand	4	4
-Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand	5	5
-Thailand Assemblies of God	10	16
-Church of God World Mission	2	3
-Other EFT registered churches	4	27
-Independent churches	18	27
Thailand Baptist Association	19	19
Seventh-Day Adv. Church in Thailand	4	4
Others	5	5
Total	126	180

In 1984, the membership was close to equal between the EFT and the CCT. Later statistics from all groups are not available. Three Districts of the CCT with congregations in Bangkok had a combined membership of 17,000 persons in 1998. Half of these could belong to the Bangkok churches.⁶³

Tables 6 and 7 give information on the size of the local churches and accessions through baptism in 1984. Even though the information was collected more than fifteen years ago, it still presents a fairly accurate picture of the situation. The statistics are a direct quote from Phairoj Napawan.

⁶³ Phairoj Napawan 1986, 59-66. In following, information on development of the membership of the Protestant churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area is given.

	1984	1998
Church of Christ in Thailand	5,089	NA
Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand	5,515	NA
Thailand Baptist Association	849	2117
Seventh-Day Adv. Church in Thail.	450	811
Expatriate membership	1,059	----
Total	12,962	----

Membership Statistics 1994-1998, Thailand Baptist Churches Association. Thailand Adventist Mission, Information on membership. July 20, 1999. Membership Statistics 1998. CCT.

Table 6. Protestant local churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. Classified by membership in 1984.

Members	Churches	Percent
0-20	24	25.00
21-40	21	21.87
41-70	14	14.58
71-100	7	7.29
101-200	16	16.67
201-300	4	4.17
301-400	3	3.13
401-600	3	3.13
601-800	2	2.08
801-	2	2.08
Total	96	100.00

Source: Phairoj Napawan 1986,7.

Table 7. Protestant local churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. Baptisms in 1984.

Baptisms	Churches	Percent
None	14	20.90
1-5	20	29.85
6-10	15	22.39
11-25	6	8.96
25-50	8	11.94
50-100	2	2.98
100 -	2	2.98
Total	67	100.00

Source: Phairoj Napawan 1986, 15

Appendix 2 and the statistics in Tables 4, 6 and 7 reveal that the majority of the local churches were small in the 1980s. Most of the churches were established after 1970 and had less than 100 members in 1984; one fourth of them had less than twenty members. The statistics on the baptisms show that most of them are growing slowly. Half of them had no more than five baptisms in 1984; twenty percent did not have any baptisms at all. Since 1984, growth has taken place. The number of churches, as well as their membership, has grown, but the majority of the churches are still small. Tables 12-13, 16-18 and 20 in Chapter 3 give information on the membership of the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The denominational local churches most likely are similar. A church with a membership more than 150 is considered to be relatively large. There are exceptions. The large churches are rather easy to identify. The new cell group (central) churches and some of the old congregations of the CCT are churches with several hundred members.

3. THE HISTORY AND CONTEXTUAL SETTING OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

The history and the contextual setting of the independent churches will be discussed in this chapter. The approach is a historical one, but section 3.6 treats social conditions that have shaped the independent churches. The churches discussed here are or have been members of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, or are in the process of joining it. Leaders of the independent churches have held prominent positions in the EFT. The most visible examples are Dr. Charan Ratanabutra, the chairman of the EFT until 1996, and Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda, elected chairman in 1996. Several of the leaders of the independent churches have backgrounds in other churches. Some of them were in leading positions in their former churches before establishing their independent churches, mostly stationed in Bangkok.

Table 8. gives information on development of the membership of the Protestant churches in Thailand since the Second World War. The reliability of the statistics is uncertain. The statistics of the Church of Christ in Thailand and the Thailand Baptist Association are more rigorously collected. The statistics given by the EFT are preliminary estimates. The growth of the CCT in the 1990s is explained by transfers. Two ethnic minority churches have joined the CCT, the Lahu Baptist churches in 1992 and the Karen Baptist churches in 1994. They form the 18th and 19th Districts of the CCT. Their combined membership was almost 42,000 in 1998.¹

¹*Sathiti khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. 1998. (Membership statistics of the CCT). The membership of the 18th District was 13,631, and the 19th District had 28,133 members in 1998. On the reliability of the CCT statistics: Herbert R. Swanson, Herb's Research Diary. HERD. Internet e-mail group. Cnxhswns@cmu.chiangmai.ac.th. 1995-, # 592. Available in print form: Office of History. Church of Christ in Thailand. According to Swanson the adult communicant membership of the CCT was estimated to be between 64,000 and 65,000 persons in 1998. On transfers: Chayan Hiraphan, 60 pee Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai. *Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai*. 1997, 84-87. (60 years of the Church of Christ in Thailand)

The combined Karen population was estimated as 3,5 million in the 1980s in Myanmar and Thailand. The official figures are lower. The first Karen (Baptist) churches were born in Myanmar (Burma) in the 19th century. The Karen Christian community in the Northern Thailand was born from the ministry of the Karen Christians from Burma and American Baptist missionaries in the latter part of 19th century. On emergence of the first Karen churches in Northern Thailand: Anders P. Hovemyr, In Search of the Karen King. A Study in Karen Identity with Special Reference to 19th Century Karen Evangelism in Northern Thailand. *Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia* XLIX. Uppsala. 1989, 1-3, 129-157.

Table 8. Summary of the growth of the Protestant churches in Thailand since the Second World War.

	1945	1950	1960	1970	1978	1986	1990	1998
CCT	8,000	13,422	18,034	21,322	29,864	36,468	45,184	107,000
Other s	NA	2,112	6,505	15,926	29,089	NA	NA	72,000
Total	8,000	15,434	24,539	36,348	58,953	NA	146,800	179,000

Sources: Smith 1982, 216, 217, 228, 265 *Sathiti khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. 1986. *Sathiti khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. 1990, 1998. (Membership statistics of the CCT) Total estimation of 1990 is taken from the Update Christian Directory 1989-1990, 2.

1998: EFT Office July 1999. Thailand Baptist Association. Membership statistics 1998. Thailand Adventist Mission, July 20, 1999. The figures for 1998 have rounded to the closest hundred.

The statistics presented in Table 8 reveal the change that has taken place in the Protestant community since the Second World War. This development will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.1.3. During the first half of the twentieth century, the American Presbyterian tradition, continued in the Church of Christ in Thailand, was dominant. Prior to the war, the mostly Presbyterian CCT comprised 88 percent of the total Protestant membership.² By 1978, the membership of the CCT and the combined membership of the other churches were equal in size. Since then, growth has taken place in all groups. In 1998, the CCT had 107,018 members. The EFT member churches had 50,450, the Thailand Baptist Association 3,844 and the Adventist Church in Thailand 7,755 members. In addition to these, the Hope of Bangkok Church (The Hope of Thai People Foundation), the United Pentecostal Church, and some smaller groups that did not belong to any of the registered groups, can be estimated to have had a total of 10,000 members. The largest of these was the Hope of Bangkok Church with about 6,000 members (Chapters 3.2.1 and 3.5.2).³

² Smith 1982, 212, 213. In 1945 local churches that did not belong to the CCT were not functioning as organized bodies.

³ *Sathiti khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. 1998. EFT Office July 1999. Thailand Baptist Association. Membership statistics 1998. Thailand Adventist Mission. July 20, 1999.

3.1. THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AND THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

The context of the emergence of the first independent churches was a series of controversies within the Church of Christ in Thailand. These controversies were connected to the revival in 1938-1939 following the evangelistic campaigns of Dr. John Sung, and the experiences during and after the Second World War. Although revivalism reached a peak within the Protestant community in John Sung's ministry, it has become clear that revivalistic practices were introduced to the community already earlier. The 1938-1939 revival was not as isolated an event as it has usually been portrayed, but it had its antecedents. The independent churches established later have been influenced by the developments within the Protestant community in the 1970s and the 1980s.

The independent churches in Thailand have been founded by Thai Christians, but the actions of the founders have been closely related to outside influences. As will be demonstrated, the founders of the independent churches have had connections not only to Western churches, mission organizations, and missionaries, but to Asian churches, missionaries and independent evangelists as well. Studies on the history of the independent churches in Thailand can thus give information to the studies of the history of the cross-cultural mission of the Asian churches.

Historically, the emergence of the independent churches is a complex phenomenon. In addition to the critical interaction with the CCT, the independent churches have been born from critical interaction with various churches and mission agencies. One possible method of classification could be to form categories according to the historical backgrounds of the independent churches, like churches based on Pentecostal and Baptist influences. Using the background as basis is however problematic. Sometimes the independent churches have been interacting with several churches and mission agencies. In addition, information is incomplete. There is enough information on the major independent churches but information is lacking on the small rural churches.

In the following chapters the independent churches in Thailand are divided into categories according to their origins and patterns of expansion. The churches born as protest against the CCT are presented as one group because their origins can clearly be linked to the developments within the CCT. The others are divided into categories according to their patterns of expansion. Here these categories are called the Evangelical Free Churches, the Emerging Denominations and the Cell Group Churches. As will be demonstrated, these categories are not exact; the place of an individual church may change from one category to another. Muang Thai Church can be mentioned as example. (See Chapter 3.4.1) It is, however, important to notice that the categories are rather constant. There are churches that follow the policy of the autonomy of a local church, churches that are developing resembling traditional denominations and a new type of highly centralized and hierarchical churches

expanding to the whole country. Dividing the independent churches into the above mentioned categories is useful for this study when the interest is on their theological thinking.

The most influential independent churches have their centers in Bangkok. The independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area are presented in Table 9 in four categories according to their origins and patterns of expansion. The information was collected in 1987. Two of the churches, the Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church (the Hope of Thai People Foundation, the Hope Place), were distinguished because of their rapid growth and expansion. The terms "daughter church" and "mother church" have become popular in the Protestant community in the 1980s. The daughter churches are new congregations established by the mother churches, organized local churches. By 1987, the independent churches had founded altogether 28 daughter churches. With the exception of the New Life Churches, most of the daughter churches were outside Bangkok. The Hope of Bangkok Church had 72 daughter churches in 1990, and 170 in 1999 according to the news paper reports. The Romklao Church listed 20 daughter churches in 1999.⁴

The Romklao Church, the Hope of Bangkok Church, the Muang Thai Church, the Vision Gospel Church, and the New Life Churches were in the process of expanding their ministries to cover the whole country in 1999. Their structures vary, but all of them have their centers in Bangkok and congregations in the other provinces. Most clearly the desire to expand to the whole country is expressed in the vision of the Hope of Bangkok Church to establish a congregation in all of the 685 *amphoes* (districts) of the country by the year 2000. It has also extended its ministry internationally. The churches in this international fellowship are called the Hope of God Churches.⁵

In 1987, the membership of the independent churches formed about a quarter of the Protestant community in Bangkok, estimated as 13 000 in 1984; within the EFT, it formed half of the community.⁶ According to Table 8. and 10., the independent

⁴ Questionnaire returned in 1990 by the Hope of Bangkok Church. Thailand Christian Directory. FEBC Radio International. Bangkok. 1992, 148. Romklao. Khrob rop 20 pee. 1999. (Anniversary publication). The Bangkok Post also claimed that the Hope of Thai People Foundation had 80,000 members. This must be an error. Even if the international Hope of God churches are taken into account this number appears to be too high. The number "branches" could be close to real. See: Bangkok Post. The Post Publishing Co. Ltd. Bangkok. January 21, 1999, 2. In the first stage of the research I actually concentrated in the independent churches located in Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

⁵Hope of Bangkok Church. 1986, 20. (In Thai). The term *amphoe* refers to a unit in local administration. An *amphoe* is a district of a province, and it is further divided into *tambols*. Each *tambol* consists of several villages (*muban*).

⁶See Phairoj Napawan 1982, 11. The questionnaire was returned by the Hope of Bangkok Church in 1990. Jaakko Mäkelä, Khrischak Issara. The Independent Churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area, Thailand, their Historical Background, Contextual Setting and theological Thinking. Abo Akademi. 1993, 50. (An unpublished Licentiate in Theology dissertation)

churches formed roughly one-third of the membership of the EFT and more than ten percent of the whole Protestant community in the whole country in 1999.

The independent churches have continued to grow after 1990. The growth and the status of the independent churches in the end of the 1990s will be discussed in detail in chapters 3.2 through 3.5. In addition to the churches classified as independent churches by the EFT Office in 1987, there were churches considered as semi-independent with only weak connections to their founding organizations. By 1999, most of these had totally severed their connections to the founding organizations and have become classified as independent churches by the EFT.

Table 9. Independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area in 1987 classified according to their origins and patterns of expansion.

Name	Founded	EFT	Members	Daughter churches
Churches begun as protests				
1. Bangkok Church	1948	1970	300	1
2. Church of God	1975	1975	35	2
Evangelical Free Churches				
1. Thonburi Baptist Church	1966	1970	115	2
2. Nonthaburi Baptist Church	----	1973	30	3
3. Krung Thai Church	1973	1977	80	1
4. Muang Thai Church	1973	1981	150	2
5. Salvation Church	1986	1987	20	-
6. Fa Muang Thai Church	1983	----	25	-
7. Sangsan Church	----	----	30est.	-
8. Siam Church	----	----	----	-
New Life Churches				
2. Sathupradit Church	1977	1980	40	1
3. Suan Phlu Church	1974	1980	40est.	1
4. Daokhanong N.L. Church	1976	1983	30	1
5. Bangkhuntian N.L. Church	1983	----	25	-
6. Tha Din Daeng N.L. Church	1985	----	20est.	-
Central Churches				
1. Romklao Church	1979	1983	1000	8
2. Hope of Bangkok Church	1981	(1984)	1500	4
Total			3480	28

Originally presented in Mäkelä 1993, 50. Attendance in worship services for Nonthaburi Baptist Church and Krung Thai Church. Sources: questionnaires 1987. EFT questionnaires on church planting 1986. Presentation papers prepared by the churches. EFT Office May, 1987. The membership of the Hope of Bangkok Church in the EFT was suspended in 1987.

The provincial independent churches differ from the Metropolitan churches. Only few of them have daughter churches, and even if these exist, they are located in the same or in neighboring provinces. Table 10 gives information on the extent of the independent churches in the end of 1990s.

Table 10. Summary of the independent churches in Thailand according to their origins and patterns of expansion in 1999.

	EFT	Total	Members
Churches born as protest against the CCT	6	8	1200
Evangelical Free Churches			
--Evangelical Free Churches in Bangkok	16	17	3890
--Evangelical Free Churches in Chiang Mai	13	13	870
--Evangelical Free Churches in other Provinces	31	31	1180
Emerging Denominations			
--Muang Thai Church, Ruam Nimit Church	2	2	2300
--New Life Churches	6	14	630
Cell Group Churches	1	2	9180
Total	75	87	19,250

This table is a summary of Tables 12 - 18 and 20 presented in the following chapters. For Muang Thai Church, Ruam Nimit Church and the Cell Group Churches the number of churches refers to the national organization, not the local churches.

Statistics presented in Table 10 must be understood as estimates derived from various sources. It is difficult to obtain accurate information. In 1999, 23 of the 75 independent churches registered by the EFT returned the questionnaire. Not all gave information on the membership. The registered membership was requested in the questionnaire. That means that the figures given by the churches most likely concern the baptized adults.

Information was collected by other means as well. There are references to the independent churches in literature. In some cases, the information received from knowledgeable individuals was used.

There is no information available on several churches, most of which are located in the rural areas. These have probably been closed, or they have joined other groups. However, if these churches still exist, their joint membership should not exceed 300 persons. Also, limited information is given about the daughter churches of the churches classified as Evangelical Free Churches.

The total should be seen as a conservative estimate. If the children of church members and people preparing for baptism are included in the statistics, the community may appear larger. However, these figures may not be that high. The membership of the independent churches most likely consists of young adults. The cell group churches have apparently often given information on the community, not the baptized membership.

The survey in 1999 gave some information on baptism. It seems likely that most of the churches do not have many baptisms per year.

The legacy of the past is seen in the Protestant churches of Thailand, including the independent churches, in several areas. These are the regional church pattern, the relationship between the institutions and local churches, the economical self-reliance, the question on holiness, the form of government of the local church, baptism, and the

understanding on the ordained ministry.

The regional church pattern still influences the churches, especially in the rural areas. There are various modifications of the pattern.⁷ The mother church - daughter church concept can partly be seen as a modification of this pattern.

The American Presbyterian Mission developed the administration of the institutions separately from the local churches. Within the CCT, the larger institutions belonging to the Foundation of the CCT, and the local churches function separately under their own Executive Committees. Within the groups related to the EFT, the institutions are often run by independent organizations. These organizations draw their income either from their activities or from abroad.⁸

The Protestant community, including the independent churches, still receives support from abroad. Obtaining reliable information is difficult, but the support can be divided into two categories. The first is the direct subsidy to running expenses and the salaries of the workers. A church that is able to pay the salary of its own pastor seems to be considered to be self-reliant. It can still receive outside support for other running expenses. The second category comprises support for investments. Even in the exceptions where the projects have been carried out by using local money, some money originating from abroad has been received through Thai and foreign organizations registered in Thailand. If money from abroad is received without a formal agreement between the donor and the receiver, the church is still considered a

⁷One modification of the regional church pattern is to gather the village groups regularly for a communion service in the town church. Communion is held only in the town church, but otherwise the village congregations function rather independently. An example is the Nakhorn Thai Church of the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand (in cooperation with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission) in the North. Interview with Mr Hannu Kettunen. April 19, 1987. An experiment to break the regional church pattern is made in Northeastern Thailand by the Evangelical Covenant Church of America - Thailand Mission, which has established the Center for Church Planting and Church Growth in Udorn Thani. In the beginning, the work was itinerant evangelism. Where a group of believers was born, workers of the Center started to train local leaders. The work began with 45 believers in 1977. By 1982 there were more than 550 believers of whom 425 had already been baptized. Stephen T. Franklin, A New Christian Community and its Surrounding Culture in Northeast Thailand. Missiology. An International Review, Vol XI, No 1. January 1983, 75-93. In 1995 the membership was informed to be 3,360. World Churches Handbook 1997, 814 .The Center has prepared a document on their working principles. Integrated Holistic Development at the "Center". Center for Church Planting and Church Growth in N.E. Thailand. Mimeograph, no date. On the Internet homepages in July 2000 the membership was given as 3250 members in 350 congregations in the Northeastern region, Chiang Mai and Bangkok. The Evangelical Covenant Church was established in 1993. Online: Evangelical Covenant Church URL:<http://www.iserv.net/thaicou/startmap.html>.

⁸Structure of Administration of the Church of Christ in Thailand. Mimeograph, No date. Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai. 1974, 2.115 - 2.134.(Constitution of the CCT). Chayan Hiranphan 1997, 114. The Executive Committees are controlled by the Administrative Council (Kammakan Amnuaykarn) meeting at least twice a year, and the General Assembly convening every fourth year. The individual local churches may have their own institutes, schools and day-nurseries. They are commonly looked upon as means for economical self-reliance of the churches. Some of the older local churches, like the Bangkok Church, have continued the patterns of the CCT by establishing their own institutions.

self-supporting church.

3.1.1. The revival and controversy 1938-1941

The revival following the campaigns of Dr. John Sung and the controversy caused by the revival have not been studied much, even though the revival influenced not only the independent churches but also the whole Protestant community. The influence of the revival can be seen in evangelistic practices, in worship life, and in the doctrinal emphases.⁹

The presentation of the outline of John Sung's ministry is based especially on Lesley T. Lyall's and William E. Schubert's books. Both are sympathetic to John Sung; William E. Schubert was Sung's co-worker. John Sung's autobiography ends in 1931, when his evangelistic ministry was beginning to expand. His personal journals and much of the material he dictated to friends before his death in Peking in 1944 were out of reach in China at the time Lyall wrote his book.¹⁰

John Sung (1901-1944) was a son of a Methodist preacher in Fukien, Southeast China. In February 1927, when he was studying in the United States of America, he had a deep spiritual experience of sin and salvation. He considered this experience as his new birth, and regarded his earlier faith insufficient. After returning to China, he became an itinerant evangelist. From 1935 onwards, he began to travel among the expatriate Chinese in Southeast Asia. In 1940 his health began to deteriorate, and he died in 1944.¹¹

The revival had three characteristics. First, it was a revival in the Christian community, with the strongest impact on the expatriate Chinese in Southeast Asia, especially in Singapore. In Thailand and Indonesia, his ministry reached also other peoples of the region. Reliable statistical accounts on the extent of the movement are

⁹On the impact of the revival on the Christian community in Northern Thailand, see e.g. Philip Hughes, Proclamation and Response. A Study of the Christian Faith in Northern Thailand. Payap University Archives. Chiang Mai. 1989, 31-35.

¹⁰Lesley T. Lyall, John Sung. China Inland Mission. London. 1954, xv, 187-189. William E. Schubert, I Remember John Sung. Far Eastern Bible College Press, Singapore. 1976. John Sung, My Testimony. The Autobiography of Dr John Sung. Living Books for all (Asian Division). Hong Kong. 1977. The book is the second edition of the autobiography, the previous edition being published in 1942.

¹¹Lyall 1954, 3, 9, 25, 29-38, 142, 166-167, 200-204. John Sung 1977, 15-20, 79-81. As a boy of nine John Sung experienced a spiritual revival. In 1920 he received a scholarship to study in the United States of America, where he studied until receiving the Doctor of Philosophy-degree in Chemistry in 1926. After this he enrolled at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. A spiritual crisis was developed, partly because of the influence of the Social Gospel - theology. John Sung writes on his experience as a boy: "I did not repent of my sins nor did reform my ways." Sung 1977, 20. In 1931-34 John Sung worked together with the Bethel Bands of the Evangelize China Fellowship, a Chinese evangelistic organization using small teams composed of new converts as the way of work. On Bethel Bands, see Lyall 1954, 58-59, 73-74, 100. Schubert 1976, 23-26.

lacking. The statistics presented by Lyall are sketchy; they do not distinguish between the conversions from other religions, and renewals or repentance of nominal Christians. The terms conversion and profession of faith are used for both groups. Schubert claims that John Sung had 100 000 converts.¹²

The second characteristic of the revival movement was the criticism of established Churches and mission agencies. According to Lyall, this was a pattern repeated frequently. The preachers, elders, and deacons, suspected of corruption, were continually under attack. Public confessions of repenting leaders are recorded as a constant pattern. Missionaries suspected of liberal theology were criticized as a group, but individual missionaries did co-operate with John Sung.¹³

The third characteristic was organizing the new converts into independent "witness bands" with their own administration. John Sung criticized the existing Protestant churches, and emphasized the independent nature of the witness bands in organization, in finance, and doctrinal questions. In spite of this, the witness bands, with one exception, were not formally organized as independent churches.¹⁴

The revival movement in 1938-1939

The literature on the revival in Thailand and its consequences is fragmentary, the most comprehensive being Prasith Pongudom's (1984) presentation. An important source is a recorded interview of Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn in 1979. Primary sources, committee minutes and correspondence, are available in the Payap University Archives in Chiang Mai.

John Sung made two visits in Thailand, first in March-April 1938. The meetings were held in the Chinese Maitrichit Church in Bangkok. Seven hundred conversions were recorded, mainly repenting Christians. The second visit was made in 1939, probably in

¹²Lyall 1954, Preface 15, 168-169, 176-181. Examples on statistics on conversions: Lyall 1954, 146-147, 151. Schubert 1976, 23.

¹³On criticism towards missionaries and church leaders: Lyall 1954, 69-72, 85-88, 101-105, 108, 130, 152. The China Inland Mission, later called the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, seems as an organization to have been co-operating. The reasons for co-operation may be partly doctrinal, but it should be noted that the China Inland Mission was an independent organization. The attacks on missionaries could be seen in the context of the national Christians in their process of gaining independence by criticizing the missionaries.

¹⁴Lyall 1954, 125-126, 143-147, 151-153, 166-169, 176-181, 198-199, 203. One independent church was established in 1934 in Tientsin, China. According to Lyall, John Sung himself was reluctant to support this trend, but in this instance complied in order to maintain the freedom of worship for the members of the bands. A conclusion can be drawn that up to two or three thousand bands were formed. Paying attention to sound doctrine was mentioned as one of the main tasks of the League president in the last instructions of the Preaching Band Organization in Singapore. See: Lyall 1954, 198-199. Smith 1982, 196. Schubert 1976, 9. (Foreword by Rev. Roy J Birkey).

June-August. At that time, the tour extended to Chiang Mai and Lampang in the North, Trang in the South, and other places. According to Prasith Pongudom, meetings were held in larger churches throughout the country. Boonmark Kittisarn, the General Secretary of the CCT at that time, and Suk Phongsnoi acted as interpreters. The campaign had little effect on the non-Christian population. This can be verified by the membership statistics of the CCT. Before 1938, the membership of the CCT fell during three consecutive years despite the addition of new members. Between 1938 and 1940, the number of members leaving the church decreased sharply. This was the main factor for the increase in membership. The accessions through baptism did not change much from the previous years.¹⁵

The reports on the influence of the campaigns on Thai churches are contradictory to some extent. Lyall and Smith maintain that the campaigns touched the Thai churches only little. Boonmark Kittisarn and Prasith Pongudom speak about Thais taking part in the campaigns. The sermons by John Sung in 1939 at the Maitrichit Church were published in Thai. As the development of the Bible school controversy demonstrates, the revival touched the Thai churches, but the impact did not last for a long time in an organized form. The witness band organization survived longer in the Chinese churches.¹⁶

The first visit of Dr Sung in Thailand was on the personal invitation of Boonmark Kittisarn, the General Secretary of the Church of Christ in Siam (Thailand, CCT). He was the only one in the Executive Council of the CCT in favor of inviting John Sung to Thailand. The missionary body was divided, with only some willing to co-operate. In the North, Rev. Loren S. Hanna became the most visible supporter of the revival movement. The available sources do not mention direct attacks on missionaries by John Sung, but during the Bible School controversy that followed the campaign, the division among the missionaries became certain. According to Boonmark Kittisarn, the attitude of the national leaders became less critical when they saw the results of the

¹⁵Lyall 1954,161, 206. Prasith Pongudom 1984, 83. Blanford 1975, 34. Smith 1982, 195-196. *Boonmark Kittisarn, Karn samphat*.1979, 3-5. 73/79 OHT 71779- 76/79. Payap. (Interview by Chayan Hiraphant, December 3 and 8,1979). Typescript from tape. According to Alex Smith, Lyall made an overstatement claiming that the membership of the CCT grew from 7000 to 9000 because of the campaigns of John Sung. The net gain was 986 persons between 1938 and 1940. Smith 1982, 196-197. There are reports of conversions of non-Christians as well. From 1992 to 1994 I was assisting at Don Muang Church of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand (since 1994 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand). An old Christian Chinese man, called A Pae by the church members, had moved to the neighborhood. He said that as a young man, he had attended John Sung's campaign in Trang province. He said that he had "received the faith" then. A large number of non-Christians had attended the meetings.

¹⁶Lyall 1954, 169. Blanford 1975, 35. Smith 1982, 195-196. John Sung's sermons July 22-August 1, 1939 at the Maitrichit Church were published under the title: *Rian Phrakhampi kab Dr John Sung. Na Boot Baptist, Thanon 22 Karakada, Phra Nakorn. 22 Karakadakhom 1- Singhakhom 1939. Kong Prakat Phra Khris Sasana*. 1939. As late as in 1958 at the Maitrichit Church the Bethel Bible School was opened with some subsidy from Dr. Andrew Gih and the Evangelize China Fellowship, with whom John Sung co-operated for several years. The School was still functioning in 1974. See: Blanford 1975, 35.

first visit.¹⁷

The first witness bands in Thailand were established soon after John Sung's visits. In June 1939, Loren Hanna reported that 216 persons joined the witness bands in Lampang. The national organization was established by the end of 1939 by the name *Kong Prakat Phra Khrist Sasana*, the troop for proclaiming Christianity. The organization was set up as independent, not being under the CCT or its local churches. This independence was one of the critical points raised by people who did not join the movement. It created some discussion, even among the persons joining the revival. At least Loren Hanna was aware of the problem, but in spite of this, he supported the independence of the movement.¹⁸

The Bible school controversy.

The Bible school controversy developed immediately after John Sung's second visit to Thailand. In August 1939, people touched by the revival wanted to establish a Bible school for the newly organized witness bands in connection with the McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. Loren Hanna was requested to be in charge of the school. It became evident that there was a strong disagreement between the people touched by the revival and Rev. Carl Elder, the principal of the Seminary. In September 25, 1939 a letter requesting to remove him from the Seminary was sent to Rev. Paul A. Eakin, the chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Presbyterian Mission.¹⁹

Three parties emerged. The first party included the witness bands, which comprised of several hundred members; the most visible leaders were Boonmark Kittisarn, Dr. Chinda Singhanetra from Chiang Mai, and Loren Hanna. The target of their criticism was the McGilvary Theological Seminary and its principal, Carl Elder, who was accused of liberal views. The debate took a form of a fundamentalist-modernist controversy, where the hermeneutical method became central. Doctrinal questions on new birth and sanctification and on the nature of the church seem to have been in the background at this stage. The controversy developed within the CCT; no attempts to

¹⁷Lyll 1954, 161-162, 168-169. Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 3, 4, 21, 22. Boonmark Kittisarn had learned of John Sung through the members of the Maitrichit Church.

¹⁸Loren S. Hanna. Circular letter. June 9th, 1939. 001/78. Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. Participants of Bible Conference in Bangkok. August 2, 1939. 001/78. Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. More than hundred participants, including Boonmark Kittisarn, M. C. McCord, John Hawk, Forrest Travaille, Jane Brown. Christians in Chiang Mai to the Exec. Committee of the Mission. No date, in 1939. 001/78. Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. (In Thai, 166 signatures). Prasit Pongudom 1984, 85, uses a term *Kong Asa Prakat Issara*, voluntary independent preaching band. The bands had their own flag, which was used during the campaigns. The term *kong* is used especially by the military and the Government, and can be translated as band, troop, force, division, company.

¹⁹ Christians in Chiang Mai to the Executive Committee of the Mission. Christians in Chiang Mai to Paul A Eakin. In Thai, September 25th, 1939. 47 signatures. 001/78, Box 11, Folder 15. Payap.

lead the movement outside the CCT were made.²⁰

The second group consisted of people connected to the McGilvary Theological Seminary. Carl Elder took a strong stand against the revivalists. Rev. Banjob Bansiddhi and Khru Prasert Inthaphant, teachers of the Seminary followed him. They expressed as their opinion that Boonmark Kittisarn was using John Sung as a tool to gain popularity for himself: the origin was in personal conflicts.²¹

There was also a third group, consisting of some missionaries and national Christians, who tried to remain neutral. Already in August 1939, some missionaries were requesting caution in establishing a Bible school as a new institute. At the same time, it was mentioned that Bible study classes were being opened in most of the stations in the North. The division into three groups may have been most visible in Chiang Mai. The Executive Council of the CCT seems to have been passive.²²

Paul Eakin was inclined to see the whole controversy as a personal conflict and tried to prevent the theological issues from entering the debate. He did not trust Boonmark Kittisarn, and saw a split developing within the revival movement, because Chinda Singhanetra, the leader of the witness bands in Chiang Mai, had not signed the letter requesting Elder's removal from McGilvary Theological Seminary. Eakin was reluctant to put the matter to vote in the Executive Committee of the Mission and was obviously expecting the revival movement itself to be split.²³

It seemed unclear how the controversy should have been solved, and who should have taken action. In October 1939, the Board of Directors of the McGilvary Theological Seminary made the following recommendations. First, it was not possible to have two principals and Boards of Directors operating at the Seminary at the same time. Second, the Board was sympathetic to those who had sent the request to the Executive Committee of the American Presbyterian Mission asking it to permit the missionaries to assist the Board in arranging Bible teaching for those who desired it. Third, the Executive Committee of the Mission, together with the Executive Council of the CCT, should appoint a committee for arranging Bible conferences throughout the CCT. In

²⁰Loren S. Hanna to Paul Eakin. September 15, 1939. Chinda Singhanetra to Paul Eakin. September 20th, 1939. 001/78, Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. Hanna criticizes some books Elder had given to students to read. These included Bosworth's The Life and Teachings of Jesus and Skinner's Concerning the Bible.

²¹Carl Elder to Paul Eakin. October 9, 1939. Banjob Bansiddhi and Prasert Inthaphant to Paul Eakin. October 25, 1939. 001/78, Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. Translation into English, original in Thai. According to Elder, Boonmark Kittisarn was the head of the whole revivalist organization. He also suspected that the purpose of asking Loren Hanna to lead the Bible school was a temporary solution, and that Boonmark Kittisarn and Suk Phongsnoi would later be brought in.

²²H.W. Stewart to the Executive Committee of the Mission. August 10, 1939. 001/78 Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. Paul A. Eakin to Chinda Singhanetra. October 1939. 001/78. Box 11, Folder 15. Payap.

²³Paul Eakin to Chinda Singhanetra. September 30, 1939. Chinda Singhanetra to Paul Eakin. October 18, 1939. Paul Eakin to Carl Elder. October 18, 1939. 001/78, Box 11, Folder 15. Payap.

November 1939, the Executive Committee of the Mission made a resolution on the same line with the recommendations of the Board of Directors. Carl Elder was to continue as the principal.²⁴

The resolution was a compromise. The need for Bible instruction to the laity was acknowledged, and arrangements to organize the instruction were made. To this extent, the expectations of the revival movement were met. The Bible instruction and the witness bands were not to become totally independent, but connected with the official structures of the CCT. This went against to the expectations of the revivalists. The attempts to control or influence the McGilvary Theological Seminary and to remove Carl Elder from the seminary were not materialized.

The controversy got a new turn when the office of the pastor of the First Church in Chiang Mai became vacant in 1940. Elder announced that he would consider the election of a non-graduate as disparaging the Seminary. Rev. Boonmee Rungruengwong was elected, and Elder, together with Rev. Banjob and Kru Prasert, resigned as protest in the end of 1940. As a result, the Seminary was closed, and it remained so until the end of the Second World War.²⁵

The witness band organization functioned until the outbreak of the Second World War. Information on the extent of the movement and its functions during 1941 is lacking. It has not been possible to verify how the people touched by the revival reacted to the resolutions of the Executive Committee of the Mission made in November 1939. Bible instruction to the witness bands was obviously done independently by the leaders of the movement. When the Japanese occupation began in December 1941, the controversy was still without a satisfactory solution.

Evaluation of the revival

The revivalism within the Thai Christian community reached a peak in John Sung's ministry. However, it had its precedents, which will be discussed more in chapter 4.1.2. John Sung's ministry can also be seen as an early example of the involvement of

²⁴The Board was appointed by the General Assembly of the CCT, and consisted of Rev. N.C. Elder, Acharn Charoen Wichai, Rev Prasok Chairatana, Khru Muak Chailangkarn, Rev. Allen Basset, Rev. J.L. Eakin, Rev. L.J.Beebe. In 1942 Rev. Prasok became the Moderator of the CCT. See Wells, 1958, 144, 158, 161. Carl Elder to Paul Eakin. October 31, 1939. Paul Eakin to Chinda Singhanetra, November 24, 1939. 001/78, Box 11, Folder 15. Payap. The Executive Committee, including Loren Hanna, had been unanimous.

²⁵Prasit Pongudom 1984, 86,87. Boonmee Rungruenwong was not a seminary graduate, but was ordained after a special examination. This kind of arrangement has been made possible by the Constitution of the CCT. The qualifications for ordination are not connected to a certain degree, but the candidates have to pass an examination and their qualifications are studied case by case. Elder was supporting a seminary graduate, Suwan Chaiwattana, but the church considered him too young. According to the present Constitution, the qualifications are examined by the Committee on the Theological Education of the CCT and the District Assembly. *Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai*. 1974, 2.16.

the Asian Christians in cross-cultural mission and evangelism.

The controversy on the revival and the Bible school had at least four dimensions. The first was a personal conflict. Boonmark Kittisarn seems to have been a controversial figure. He was at odds with his colleagues in the leadership of the CCT. Missionaries, both those openly opposing the revival movement and those with a neutral attitude, criticized him. His most vocal critic, Carl Elder, seems to have been a controversial figure as well.

The second was a theological dimension. Paul Eakin tried to prevent the theological issues from entering the debate. Prasith Pongudom concludes that the lack of understanding of the Presbyterian teaching was a factor causing people to easily follow new doctrines presented by John Sung.²⁶ At the same time, it should be noted that the leaders and the members of the revival came from the CCT itself. Rather than keeping the movement as a foreign element, it should be understood in the context of a division within the Presbyterian tradition. The revivalists wanted to keep the movement within the CCT; their main concern in 1939 was the way of interpreting the Bible. To a large extent, in the beginning of the movement, they were following the tradition of the pioneer missionaries. The fundamentalist-modernist debate in America had obviously influenced the missionaries in Thailand, and this division became visible in the Bible school controversy. Later, during the Second World War, the views of Boonmark Kittisarn and some of his closest associates became more radical. At that time the lack of understanding the Presbyterian teaching certainly became an important factor.

The third dimension was the relations between the Church and the Mission. The CCT had been organized as a national Church in 1934, but its leadership was unable to play a significant role in solving the controversy. Prasith Pongudom sees the controversy as a dominance of missionaries over national leaders.²⁷ However, the situation was more complicated. Both the leaders of the CCT and the missionaries were divided and engaged in an internal struggle for power within both groups. Boonmark Kittisarn's influence increased during the revival. He was critical of both the missionaries and the other leaders of the CCT. The others in the leadership of the CCT seem to have lacked real authority and experience. They followed the development of the revival movement passively, and eventually the actual decision making was shifted again to the missionaries.

The fourth dimension was the relationship between the revival movement and the Church. The revival took the CCT by surprise; it was not able to integrate it into the existing structures. The leadership of the CCT was divided and unable to function. The Executive Council of the CCT could not prevent Boonmark Kittisarn from inviting John Sung to Thailand. Later they became less critical, but the acceptance seems to have been passive. The membership of the CCT had decreased during the

²⁶Prasith Pongudom 1984, 87.

²⁷Ibid., 88.

years prior to the revival. Considering this, it is understandable that the leadership of the CCT was unable to take any decisive actions in the controversy. They could not act openly against the revival, but were not supporting it either. The missionaries were divided. The revivalists wanted to keep the movement within the CCT, but insistence on the independence of the movement was a matter which could not be left unsolved for a longer period.

Smith evaluates the revival very positively. Without the revival the situation would have been even more disastrous during the war years.²⁸ On the other hand, the failure in integrating the revival to the official structures of the CCT virtually divided the CCT into two antagonist groups.

3.1.2. Experiences during the Second World War

The Japanese landed in Thailand on December 8, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Thailand had tried to remain neutral, but this show of force by the Japanese Army forced the Thais to surrender after a short period of fighting. The participation of Christians in the Free Thai resistance movement has not been studied in detail, but John B. Hasemann states that the influence of the missionaries and the Thai Christians was of particular importance in forming the resistance efforts in the North.²⁹

The Christian ministry was forced into a standstill when the Japanese occupied Thailand. The problems connected to the revival and the Bible school controversy were still without a satisfactory solution. The missionaries fled or were interned, churches and Christian institutions were closed, and church members were persecuted. The CCT was not able to convene its General Assembly during the war years, but its Executive Committee met occasionally after 1942. During the war years, the organization of the CCT was in the hands of people touched by the revival. Others remained silent or even renounced their faith under the pressure. Boonmark Kittisarn, Suk Phongsnoi and Boonmee Rungruengwong, leaders of the pre-war revival, traveled extensively visiting churches. The situation varied in different parts of the country. The Japanese rejected Christianity, but according to Smith, the greatest persecution came from the Thai Buddhist nationalists. However, the participation of Christians in the resistance movement should not be forgotten. Possibly one fifth of the Christians openly remained as Christians, and one fifth openly reverted and denied Christ. The rest remained silent; some of them still read the Bible in their homes.³⁰

²⁸Smith 1982, 196-197.

²⁹ Hasemann, 5-19,96-97. Hasemann claims that some of the missionaries stayed behind and took part in the resistance movement.

³⁰Smith 1982, 204-213. Eakin, Survey report for Bangkok. 1946. Boonmark Kittisarn, 1979. 1-3. Wells 1958, 161, claims that the General Assembly of the CCT convened in 1942, 1943, and 1944.

3.1.3. Developments within the Protestant community since the Second World War and the first independent churches

Developments after the Second World War have radically changed the Protestant community in Thailand. The changes can be divided into two parts, developments within the CCT and the rise of the groups affiliated with the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. Both of these developments have affected the independent churches.

The developments that have affected the independent churches within the CCT can be tentatively summarized as follows. First, during the immediate post-war years, controversies based on war-time experiences divided the leadership of the CCT. Secondly, during the 1950s the most notable developments were the integration of the American Presbyterian Mission with the CCT and the Pentecostal controversy. Third, during the 1960s and 1970s, the CCT was affected by the theological polarization within the Protestant churches worldwide. Fourth, during the 1980s and 1990s the CCT has been developing towards a theological and ecclesiastical conglomerate.

After the war, restoring those who remained silent or denied their faith created a controversy, which finally divided the CCT. The books written by expatriates are silent on the controversy, which took place within the CCT during the years immediately after the Second World War. Prasith Pongudom gives an account of the developments. An important document is a survey report written by Paul Eakin in 1946.³¹

The returning missionaries led by Paul Eakin took a clear stand in 1946 in favor of restoring back into leadership positions those who had remained silent or denied their faith during the war. Eakin reasoned that these people should be given a chance to repent and to return to the Church. Secondly, they had repented and should therefore be restored to their pre-war positions. Boonmark Kittisarn opposed the restoration but seems to have lost his influence. Obviously he was not convinced that the repentance of the returning leaders was genuine, and considered them opportunists. The available sources do not give information on whether or not disciplinary actions before the restoring were considered. If not, Boonmark Kittisarn's actions become more logical.³²

The missionaries were divided. Prasith Pongudom describes the groupings as "modernists" and "fundamentalists". The modernists had more influence on the work. For example, the "fundamentalist" Loren Hanna, the most visible supporter of the revival prior to the war, returned in Thailand but was forced to return to America after a year for medical reasons. The national leaders were divided partly along the same

³¹Prasith Pongudom 1984, 92-121. Eakin, Survey report for Bangkok, 1946.

³²Eakin, Survey report for Bangkok, 1946. Prasith Pongudom 1984, 114-121. The first missionaries returned under the name of the World Church Service, an ecumenical relief agency. The Presbyterian Mission was not formally re-organized before 1948.

lines as the missionaries.³³

It is doubtful whether the terms presented by Prasith Pongudom describe the factions correctly. Especially the term “fundamentalist” has later received derogatory connotations. Nevertheless, the division into factions among the missionaries was a fact. This problem will be discussed more in the Chapter 4.1.

Joining the World Council of Churches became topical in the CCT after the war. Boonmark Kittisarn, who had resigned from his position as the General Secretary, opposed it. When the CCT joined the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, he left the CCT and organized an independent church called the Bangkok (Thai) Church. At the same time independent churches were also established at least in Chiang Mai. Most likely reports on independent churches established outside these two centers refer to developments in the late 1950s.³⁴

Since the Second World War, the relationships between the mission agencies and the CCT have gone through a drastic change. In 1957 the American Presbyterian Mission was dissolved and its property was transferred to the Foundation of the CCT. The missionaries have continued as “fraternal workers”. New mission agencies have joined the CCT, and the American Presbyterian Mission has lost its dominant position. Many of the new mission agencies work among the ethnic minorities. In 1986, 25 foreign organizations were affiliated with the CCT.³⁵

The years since the Second World War until the end of the 1970s were a time of recurring controversies. The Protestant community in Thailand was affected by the

³³Eakin, Survey report for Bangkok, 1946. Prasith Pongudom 1984, 114-121. Claralise Hanna, ed., Letters from Hazel. Mimeograph. 1980, 179

³⁴Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 82, 125-127. Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987. Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok 1946. The Church of Siam was listed on the roll of the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC 1948. See David P. Gaines, The World Council of Churches. A study of its Background and History. Richard R. Smith Co Inc. Peterborough, New Hampshire. 1966, 229. In 1993, I understood from reports I heard that there were independent churches in the late 1940s or early 1950s in Chiang Rai and in other places as well. Further, I understood that the new churches were co-operating under the name *Sahaphan Khrischak*. However, only the Chiang Mai Thai Church was established in the early 1950s. Establishing the *Sahaphan* took place in the late 1950s. (See chapter 3.2.) See: Mäkelä 1993, 62.

³⁵The number of missionaries affiliated with the CCT was in 1982 higher than it was in 1939 (68). However, since the missionaries come from more than twenty mission agencies, it is difficult for them to make decisive impact on the CCT. See: Smith 1982, 222, 223. Update Christian Directory 1986-1987, 5-7, 11-16. The usage of the new term “fraternal worker” should be seen as an attempt to emphasize the autonomy of the CCT. The 1950s were a period when the former Mission Churches were becoming autonomous. In 1954 in the meeting of the Enlarged Committee of the International Missionary Council in Whitby the theme “Partnership in obedience” became known. On the Whitby meeting e.g. Tomas Shivute, The Theology of Mission and Evangelism in the International Missionary Council from Edinburgh to New Delhi. Missiologian ja Ekumeniikan Seuran Julkaisuja 31. Helsinki. 1980, 90-110.

polarization, which took place in the Protestant Churches worldwide. In Thailand two processes took place simultaneously. In addition to the world wide polarization, the policy of integration between the Church and the mission agencies affected the CCT.
36

The process of integration, taking place in 1956-1957, was the initiative of the American Presbyterian Mission. According to Samuel I. Kim, it was done following the integration ideology popular at that time, without proper analysis of the situation in Thailand. The CCT was not yet realistically ready to take care of the work. Kim connects, not entirely correctly, the rise of the liberal theology and the integration policy. He also implies that the “liberal” missionaries took advantage of the situation. “At one time it appeared that the Thai Church was completely overrun and controlled by the liberals... Often the evangelical segment in the CCT was ridiculed or discouraged.” The CCT was too weak to really stand on its own, and in this situation the missionaries came to exercise strong influence upon it. Possibly, the “liberal” missionaries did not remain as “good guests” of the CCT, and develop a genuine Thai leadership, but instead became leaders themselves. They were not chosen to the influential positions as representatives of the mission agencies as earlier, but artificially as local representatives. They were allied with one segment of the leadership of the CCT. Kim describes this segment as consisting mainly of graduates of the McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. Generally the membership of the CCT was theologically conservative.³⁷

The motivation for the integration policy was the desire to create a strong national church. This desire was, however, not fulfilled. Soon after the integration took place, the theological polarization became visible in Protestant churches, and the liberal theology influenced one segment in the CCT. The integration also took place at an

³⁶Samuel I Kim, The Unfinished Mission in Thailand. The Uncertain Christian Impact on the Buddhist Heartland. East-West Center from Missions Research & Development. Seoul, Korea. 1976. This book is the only major work dealing with the developments in the CCT during the 1960s and 1970s. It can be seen as the memoirs of a person who has been part of the developments. It is important as a source of information. However, it must be used critically. Kim’s presentation is biased. This can be seen most clearly by the fact that he often makes generalizations without giving proper documentation. He gives an impression that he was almost the only one among the missionaries not affected by the liberal theology. Only the missionaries of the Marburger Mission are presented in favorable light. The liberal faction in the CCT personnel is presented in an even more generalized way. The actions of the evangelical wing within the CCT are presented more accurately. Kim gives an impression that the co-operation between him as an Asian missionary and the Thai national Christians was smooth and fruitful all the time. This might have been true, but later the experiences of co-operation between the Korean missionaries and Thai Christians have not always been harmonious. Asian missionaries have advantages in building up the relations, but finally they are foreigners in Thailand as well. On evangelical reactions to the developments within the World Council of Churches, especially Donald A. McGavran and the Church Growth theology: Sakari Pinola, Church Growth. Principles and Praxis of Donald A. McGavran’s Missiology. Åbo Akademi University Press. 1995.

³⁷Kim 1976, 79-100. Quote: Kim 1976, VIII. See also: Wichien Watkicharoen, interview July 7, 1999. Tape, in Thai.

unfortunate time. The leadership of the CCT was weakened due to internal and external reasons. The post-war developments, especially the actions of Rev. Boonmark and his associates, had left the CCT factionalized. Externally, while the CCT was going through the integration process, the Pentecostal revival badly divided the CCT especially in the North. This was followed by the controversies with the United Pentecostal Church and the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental).

The theological polarization, which took place in the 1960s and 1970s, has been described as a controversy between the liberal and conservative theological thinking, or as a struggle between the ecumenicals and evangelicals. The controversies took place as internal controversies within the mainline churches connected to the World Council of Churches and as mistrust and accusations between the WCC and organizations and churches not joining the WCC. In Thailand, the polarization took place as a division within the CCT, and as an influx of new organizations growing by transfer. Four major controversies when existing churches were split are evident in the records. The first was the birth of the first independent churches in the 1940s and early 1950s. This was an internal matter of the CCT; there were external influences, but external organizations were not directly involved. The foreign organizations were directly involved in the three other controversies: the Pentecostal revival after 1956, the controversy with the United Pentecostal Church in the 1960s, and the controversy with the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental). However, most of the new mission agencies were concentrating on pioneer evangelism and were generally not involved in drawing members from the CCT or the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches.³⁸

The CCT has been described as a Presbyterian Church (Chapter 4.1.2). Nonetheless, the CCT has been developing towards a theological and ecclesiastic conglomerate. Most likely the development will lead to a situation where the Districts of the CCT will become more and more varied. For example, the 12th District consists of the Maitrichit Church, an originally Chinese Baptist Church in Bangkok, and its daughter churches. They have shown more dynamic growth than the originally Presbyterian churches, at least in the Bangkok Metropolitan area. The CCT has not only lost members to other churches; it has grown through transfer as well. The 13th District, with its Offices in Udon Thani, was formed of the congregations which left the Christian and Missionary Alliance. There are Districts, like the Lahu Baptist Churches of the 18th District, and the Karen Baptist Churches of the 19th District, which consist of churches not established by the Presbyterians.³⁹

³⁸On the theological polarization e.g: Matti Mäkelä, Mission According to John R.Stott. A Study with Special Reference to the Ecumenicals and Evangelicals. Åbo Akademi University Press. 1999, 5-50, 66-69. Stott, as an Evangelical Anglican, has been influential in defining the theological standpoints of the Evangelicals. At the same time he has maintained contacts to the WCC-related churches.

³⁹In 1975 nineteen of the CMA churches in the Northeast under the leadership of the Udon (City) Church withdrew and joined the CCT. Heckendorf, 1983, 8. The Karen Baptist Churches, now forming the 19th District, and Lahu Churches forming the 18th District joined the CCT between 1994 and 1997. They were not listed in the 1994 Directory, but were listed in 1997. See: Thailand Christian Directory 1997, 158-163.

It is a matter of further study, but it seems apparent that during the years definite changes have taken place in the policies of the CCT. Although the Constitution of the CCT reflects an attempt to build an ecumenical body, the Presbyterian form of church administration is central. During the post-war years the CCT tried to maintain its Presbyterian heritage. Several indicators can be mentioned. During the post-war restoration Boonmark Kittisarn was accused of having “extreme views”. According to Alex Smith, the Chinese Baptist Maitrichit Church withdrew from the CCT in 1953 over a conflict on the mode of baptism, and rejoined in 1959 in order to establish the new 12th District. Another matter was relations to mission agencies. At least in the 1970s the CCT did not accepting new mission agencies with differing confessional backgrounds to co-operate with it. New mission agencies were accepted only on the condition that they would totally integrate with the CCT. Opening new ministries within the framework of the CCT was not possible.⁴⁰

The development towards a pluralistic conglomerate has been clear since the 1980s. The influx of new Districts with Baptist background will have an impact. The Districts with a definite Baptist heritage include the following: 12th District (Maitrichit Church and its daughter churches), 16th District (Karen churches in Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi), 18th District (Lahu Baptist churches) and 19th District (Karen Baptist churches). In addition, the 13th District consists of the originally Christian and Missionary Alliance churches. In 1998 these Districts consisted almost half of the membership of the CCT. Swanson argues that the “core Presbyterian identity” has

⁴⁰On the Constitution of the CCT: *Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai 1974* 5-16. On the first Constitution of the CCT: HERD #399. On Maitrichit Church: Smith 1982,16,19. On relations to the mission agencies in the 1970s: Wichien Watkicharoen, interview July 7, 1999. The representatives of the Church of God contacted first the CCT. When they were told that the CCT was not willing to receive them they turned to the EFT. Similar process took place in the in the beginning of the ministry of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. The representatives of the mission agencies that established the LMT were in contact with the CCT. First contacts were made by the representatives of the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1975. First reactions were favorable for co-operation. When the first group of the missionaries of the NMS were in 1976 preparing to leave for Thailand from Hong Kong, they received a telegram from the CCT informing that the CCT was not able to take responsibility for the new missionaries. The NMS became the member of the EFT in November 1976. When the joint organization, the Lutheran Mission in Thailand, was organized in 1980, the membership in the EFT was continued. See: Christopher Woie in I tro og tjenste. Det Norske Misjonsselskap 1842-1992. Redaktor Torstein Jorgensen. Misjonhøgskolen, Stavanger. 1992, 326-334, 337-339. (In faith and service. A 150 years anniversary publication). Contacts to the CCT continued also later. Conclusions drawn were that there would not be any possibilities to maintain the Lutheran identity of the ministry within the CCT. The discussions from the point of view of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission are recorded in various reports kept in the FELM archives. (Henrik Smedjebacka, Mirja Pesonen, Paavo Kilpi) A short summary is made by Tapio Karjalainen. Thaimaan luterilaisen lähetysten synty. 1986. (The birth of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand) Seminar paper. University of Helsinki. A study on the history of the LMT and preparations to establish the Evangelical Lutheran Church is made by Marika Björkgren. Vägen till en luthersk kyrka i Thailand. Åbo Akademi University 1998. (Towards one Lutheran Church in Thailand) Unpublished Master of Theology thesis. On establishing the Lutheran Mission in Thailand and relationship to the CCT and EFT: Björkgren 1998, 12-13, 16-22

disappeared from the originally Presbyterian Districts while the Baptist Districts maintain their Baptist identity.⁴¹

The Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand

As during the early periods of the Protestant work, the developments in China influenced the activities of the mission agencies in Thailand after the Second World War. When the Communists took over in China in the end of the 1940s, mission agencies working in China had to seek new areas to work. This caused the interest for Thailand. The influx of new mission agencies in the 1970s and the 1980s can be seen as result of the open doors policy in Thailand. Simultaneously, the other countries in the region were closing their doors because of the Vietnam War and establishment of Communist regimes in the former French Indochina.⁴²

An important event was the establishment of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. This English term was first used in 1956 for an informal fellowship consisting mainly of missionaries. Simultaneously, Boonmark Kittisarn was establishing an organization called the *Sahaphan Khrischak Thai*. This organization was an informal fellowship of the independent churches and local congregations, in which Rev. Boonmark had influence, that belonged to the CCT and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. This organization disintegrated after Rev. Boonmark joined the United Pentecostal Church in the 1960s. In the end of the 1960s Rev. Suk Phongsnoi, at that time an independent radio evangelist, was a central person in establishing co-operation between the independent churches and mission agencies. The Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand was organized in 1969, with Rev. Suk as the first Chairman. Initially the name in Thai was *Sahaphantakit Khristian haeng Prathet Thai*, but was changed to *Sahakit Khristian haeng Prathet Thai*. During the same year, the Department for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education recognized the EFT as a major religious organization. It has adopted a constitution, containing also a statement of faith. According to these, the EFT has no authority to control the theology or internal matters of its members.⁴³

In the 1980s the EFT had two categories of members. The first consisted of local

⁴¹ According to the 1998 statistics the above mentioned Districts had a combined membership of 52,651 persons. See: *Sathiti khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. 1998. Chayan Hiraphan 1997, 86-87. HERD #476.

⁴² Hill 1982, 33-45. Smith 1982, 222-224. In the beginning of 1950s at least the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Southern Baptists entered Thailand because they could not work in China any more. In the end of the 1970s the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and some smaller Missions transferred missionaries from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to Thailand. Author's observations.

⁴³ Smith 1982, 226. (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985,35-50. *Prawat khwam pen ma khong Sahakit Khristian haen Prathet Thai*. No date. EFT Office 1999. Computer print. On the *Sahaphan Khrischak Thai: Edwin Zehner, Church Growth and Culturally Appropriate Leadership: Three Examples from the Thai Church*. Draft for a Ph.D. dissertation. 1987, 44-65.

churches, meeting halls and preaching places. The second category consisted of organizations, which were divided into overseas organizations and national organizations. The distinction between the overseas and the national organizations was not clear. There were similar organizations with connections abroad in both categories. The overseas organizations were mission and relief organizations of various sizes. Many of them were interdenominational or independent. The size of the member organizations varied. The largest was the interdenominational Overseas Missionary Fellowship (former China Inland Mission), with visas for 299 missionaries in 1987. Of these visas, 172 were permanent resident visas and 129 temporary non-immigrant visas. Twenty-five missions had less than ten missionaries.⁴⁴

In 1986, the membership comprised of 48 foreign organizations, 29 national organizations, and 202 local churches. Some of the national member organizations were independent Christian organizations: theological institutes and training centers, relief organizations, or evangelistic organizations. Some of the members were denominational bodies.⁴⁵

By the end of the 1990s the membership categories have slightly changed. The distinction between the foreign and national organizations has been abolished, and the total number of member organizations, 122 in 1999, was listed according to the ministries they were involved in. The main reason for confusion has not yet been solved. The local churches can still be registered in two ways. They can be members of EFT directly, or they can belong to a denomination that is a member of the EFT. The new local churches are encouraged to seek direct membership in an existing denomination, and the qualifications for seeking separate membership are made more difficult than before. According to preliminary statistics given by the EFT, 217 local churches were registered directly by the EFT in 1998. Of these churches, 86 were independent churches, and 131 were congregations that belonged to a denomination or were daughter churches of a registered congregation, but simultaneously registered directly as EFT members. The denominations and mission agencies had 705 congregations. The daughter churches of the independent churches have mostly not been registered directly by the EFT.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Constitution of EFT, Section 3, Section 4. The Pocket Testament League- Thailand, Youth for Christ International and the Voice of Peace Radio Company were registered as national organizations, the Every Home Crusade and Far East Broadcasting Radio International as overseas organizations. See the membership lists in: Documents for Meeting of the Foreign Member Organizations of the EFT, 22 - 23. November 1984, 4/5, 4/6. Most of these documents are in Thai. Statistics of the Department for Religious Affairs. Quoted in (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 71-73. In 1987 OMF had a name list of 151 missionaries. Update Christian Directory 1987-1988, 23-25. See Appendix 3. In Appendix 3 the permanent and temporary visas have not been separated.

⁴⁵*Raichue samachik ongkarn nai prathet*.(List of the national member organizations of EFT). EFT Office 1987.

⁴⁶Directory of Member Organizations of EFT. 1998-1999. In Thai, names of the member organizations given in English. Constitution of EFT. 1998. Thai version. EFT statistics. Draft July 1999. In Thai. EFT Membership Application Form. For an independent church. In Thai.

When the list of the independent churches prepared by the EFT Office was eventually handed to me, it consisted of 75 churches. This reveals a possible discrepancy in the statistics. However, it should be pointed out that the preliminary statistics were from a study that was incomplete at that time.

All of the members of all categories of the EFT have the same rights and obligations, except for the amount of the membership fee, which is set separately for each membership category.⁴⁷ Thus, a small village congregation has the same rights as a denomination with tens of congregations, or a mission with more than hundred missionaries.

The ambivalence of the nature of the EFT can be explained by studying the process of its establishment. It is a matter of further study, but it seems evident that there were different concepts in the minds of those working for establishing the EFT. The mission agencies were looking forward to practical co-operation especially in contacts between Government agencies and those organizations that had not joined the CCT. The Christian and Missionary Alliance seems to have taken the initiative. On the other hand, there were independent local churches that felt themselves more or less "orphaned" and needed an organization to become recognized.⁴⁸

Mission agencies

Descriptions of the mission agencies active in Thailand are presented in Appendix 3, compiled in 1988. It still gives a sufficiently accurate description of the situation. In the 1990s no major changes have taken place in the government policies. The missions still have their quotas, and expanding the quota is usually not possible. This means that the total number of missionaries is about the same as it was in the end of 1980s. Minor changes of course have taken place. Most of the resident visas have expired by 2000. Information is lacking whether some of them have been replaced by non-immigrant visas. There has been discussion on the larger say of the EFT in distributing quotas. New mission agencies and independent missionaries obviously wish to come to Thailand. They can come only if they join some already registered organization or if there are vacant visa slots administered by the EFT. The result has been that a mission agency that is not able to fill its quota has to loan the quota to other agencies or to the EFT for redistribution. Since the number of mission agencies is high, obtaining information about them is difficult. A source of information is a book published in Thai by the Department for Religious Affairs in 1982. It contains information on the history, work, future plans and doctrines of the recognized

⁴⁷Constitution of EFT, Section 4, Section 5, Section 11.

⁴⁸ Christian Missionary Alliance and the Far East Broadcasting Company were the first foreign organizations registered as members of the EFT. (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 34. *Prawat khwam pen ma khong Sahakit Khristian*. (History of the EFT.) Mimeograph, Sine Anno (1987), 4. On Suk Phongnoi's ministry around 1970, see: East Asia Millions. Overseas Missionary Fellowship. London. June 1970, 57, June 1972, 54, September 1972, 78.

Christian organizations given by the organizations themselves. The EFT Directory 1998-1999 gives information about the ministries of the member organizations.⁴⁹

Table 11. indicates the number of visas used by the Protestant mission agencies in the beginning of the 1980s. Usually, the husband and wife use one visa unit. The Roman Catholics had 128 foreign priests and 49 foreign nuns in 1978. In 1981, there were 289 missionaries with permanent (resident) visas in the EFT member organizations. Many of them have resigned since that. After 1981, new permanent visas have not been granted, and extending the number of temporary (non-immigrant) visas has been difficult. The numbers for individual mission agencies are no longer exact, but can be used to indicate the sizes of the organizations. The number of independent missionaries supported directly by their local churches has possibly increased⁵⁰

Table 11. Number of missionaries in Thailand in the 1980s

Church of Christ in Thailand	148
Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand	807
Seventh-Day Adventist Churches	20
Thailand Baptist Mission (Southern Baptists)	49
Total	1024

Sources:(EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 71-73. Historical Developments and Background Material to CCT Structure 1982. Thailand's Christian Directory 1982, 77-80.

The establishment of the EFT brought forth a new type of co-operation between the national churches and foreign mission agencies. In summary it can be stated that in Thailand there have been three different models of co-operation. First was the model of full integration between the national church and the mission agencies, which was pursued in the CCT. Secondly, the *Sahaphan Khrischak Thai* was an organization of the local churches; the mission agencies were not invited. Thirdly, in the EFT the local churches and mission agencies were co-operating, in principle, on an equal basis. It is possible to point to weaknesses in the structures of the EFT; nevertheless, a new phase in mission co-operation was begun with the EFT.

⁴⁹*Raigan karn upatham sasana uen. Sasana khrist. Krom karn sasana.* 2525. (1982). Smith 1982, 270. (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 71-73-78, 79-80. Directory of Member Organizations of EFT 1998-1999.

⁵⁰The figure for EFT in Table 11 is the number of visas granted for the missionaries by the Department for Religious Affairs in 1981. Quoted in (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 71-73-78, 79-80. In 1986, the EFT Office informed that there were visas for 16 independent missionaries in 1987. Total number of missionaries was informed to be 820. *Raichue ongkarn tang prathet* (List of foreign member organizations) No date, c.1987. For the CCT the figures are from Historical Developments and Background Material to CCT Structure. Mimeograph, 1982. There were 53 missionaries with permanent resident visa in 1982 in the CCT. The figures for the Adventists and Baptists are based on the information given by the organizations for a directory in 1982. See: Thailand's Christian Directory 1982, 77. According to Smith the number of Protestant missionaries was 967 in 1978. Smith 1982, 270.

3.2. CHURCHES BEGUN AS PROTESTS AGAINST THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAILAND

The first independent churches were born as a result of controversies within the Church of Christ in Thailand. Historically they have their roots in the Presbyterian tradition carried on by the CCT. A wide range of issues was related to these controversies. These included the following: the relations between the national Church and the mission agencies; the relations between the established Church and a revival movement; the restoring of leaders who had not continued to witness under pressure; relations to the ecumenical organizations; the Bible and the hermeneutical method; the teaching about the baptism; and personal conflicts.

Prasith Pongudom tends to see the controversies after the Second World War as church politics and as a struggle for personal power. However, serious theological questions are related to the modernist - fundamentalist debate and the restoration of the people who during the time of pressure reverted or remained silent. In addition, baptism became a divisive issue immediately after the Second World War.

The years since the end of the Second World War until the early 1970s were tumultuous years in the Protestant community in Thailand. The controversies were mainly created by outside contacts. Representatives of the Pentecostal movement and some radical American Evangelical groups entered Thailand. In many cases, they not only evangelized among the non-Christian population, but drew their membership from existing churches. The denominational agencies, like the Southern Baptists (Thailand Baptist Mission), and the interdenominational evangelical mission agencies with longer history, like the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, concentrated on pioneer evangelism. Generally they were not involved in these controversies.

However, the Thai Christians did not remain passive in these controversies. As the revival in connection to the campaigns of Dr. John Sung demonstrated, there were tensions in the Protestant community before the Second World War. Already then, Boonmark Kittisarn was accused for using Dr. Sung to build up his own following. After the War, he used the outside contacts as support in expanding his ministry.

The most influential of the leaders of the protest movements was Boonmark Kittisarn. In 1993, I studied his ministry as an isolated case. However, it has become clear that he exercised a large influence upon the whole Protestant community even after his departure from the CCT. By the end of his ministry, he had become a *persona non grata* even among the groups he had helped to establish.

Boonmark Kittisarn had a large group of friends and associates. Most visible among them was Rev. Suk Phongsnoi. Boonmark Kittisarn and Suk Phongsnoi were evangelists at heart. They were not interested in doctrinal questions. Both had a large following and attempted to give organized forms to their ministry.

3.2.1. Boonmark Kittisarn's ministry and influence.

During the revival in connection to John Sung's ministry in 1938-1939, Boonmark Kittisarn had rather successfully challenged the leadership of the Church of Christ in Thailand and the American Presbyterian Mission. The revival had two centers; the Maitrichit Chinese Baptist Church in Bangkok, and the Thai-speaking Presbyterian churches in Northern Thailand. The revival, as it touched the Presbyterian churches, was still within the Presbyterian tradition. During the Second World War Rev. Boonmark was the General Secretary of the CCT. After the War he obviously expected to continue as the leader. Some of his former opponents had compromised themselves during the war, and their opposition was not expected to be influential. Actually, it was the returning missionaries who became Boonmark Kittisarn's most influential critics.

Boonmark Kittisarn lost the struggle on the control of the CCT. Even after his departure from the CCT, he still had considerable influence in the CCT and the whole Protestant community, as will be demonstrated. After his departure from the CCT, he continued his evangelistic ministry and managed to build up a considerable following. His influence reached a new peak in the end of the 1950s. In the beginning of 1960s, he again took a risk by joining the United Pentecostal Church from America and tried to lead the churches he had influence on to follow him.

Rev. Boonmark's curriculum vitae is very interesting. His involvement in the revival and controversies in the CCT between 1938 and 1946 was discussed in the previous chapter. His life reflects some sensitive issues within the Christian community in Thailand. Three of these issues are theological by nature: the conservative-liberal tension, the doctrine of baptism, and the teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The fourth issue is the mobility of church members and workers, partly connected to the proselytizing activities of some groups.

The sources available concerning Rev. Boonmark's life since his resignation from the CCT are fragmentary, largely secondary, and also inaccurate. However, it is possible to use them critically to establish the basic facts. The books published on the work of the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries (Finnish Free Foreign Mission) mention Boonmark Kittisarn frequently. In addition to Rev. Boonmark's own interview, conducted by Chayan Hiraphan in 1979, Edwin Zehner gives a rather extensive account of his ministry during the 1940s and 1950s. Zehner's presentation is mainly based on an interview with Rev. Dr. Charan Ratanabutra and his wife Mrs. Phirun, a daughter of Rev. Boonmark. Robert Nishimoto gives information on Rev. Boonmark's ministry in connection to the history of the Pentecostal movement in Thailand.⁵¹

⁵¹The books on the ministry of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission in Finnish are mostly by nature memoirs or travel reports written by persons visiting Thailand. Most of them have been written several years after the actual events. There are several more scholarly presentations. Jouko Ruohomäki, The Finnish Free Foreign Mission in Thailand in 1946-1985. A descriptive History. Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. 1988, 58-59. (A non-published Master of Religious Education thesis). Ruohomäki deals with Boonmark Kittisarn's ministry mainly only in connection to the dispute with the United

Boonmark Kittisarn (1897-1987) came from a Buddhist family. He became Christian as a young man, and was baptized in a Presbyterian Church in Phitsanuloke, in Northern Thailand in 1915. He studied first at the Bangkok Christian College and then at the McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai between 1927 –1930. The class of 1927 - 1930 had six students.⁵²

Of the six graduates, at least Boonmark Kittisarn, Suk Phongsnoi and Chulin Toktaeng later left the CCT and rose to rather influential positions outside the CCT.⁵³ Being a member of the same class, "*run diaoukan*", is a very important factor in Thai society. The members of the *run diaoukan* are supposed to stick to together and help each other. The most visible example of this, reported frequently in the newspapers, has been the military, where classes of the military academy have been struggling for influential positions within the armed forces. Because Boonmark Kittisarn was older than the others, he was the natural leader of the class, in accordance with the *phi-nong* concept. An especially close relation was formed between Boonmark Kittisarn and Suk Phongsnoi and their families.

When the CCT was organized in 1934, Rev. Boonmark was elected as a member of the Executive Committee. In 1936, he was an interpreter to Paul Lin (Lyn), a Chinese evangelist, who spent seven months in Thailand holding revival meetings in various

Pentecostal Church.. *Robert Nishimoto, Prawat Pentecost lae Kharismatic nai Prathet Thai 1946-1996. Borisat the Rock. Krungthep*, 1996, 65-76, 175-194. (The history of the Pentecostals and Charismatics in Thailand) *Hannu Kettunen, Thung Ruang Thong. Finnish Free Foreign Mission lae Khana Phra Kittikhun Somboon nai Prathet Thai. Finnish Free Foreign Mission lae Khana Phra Kittikhun Somboon nai Prathet Thai. Krungthep*. 1996, 23, 58-59. (The ripening field. The Finnish Free Foreign Mission and the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand) Kettunen deals very briefly with Boonmark Kittisarn's ministry. See also: Zehner 1987, 44-65.

⁵²Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 1-3, 26, 48-49. *Anuson Sasanasartsueksa 100 pee*. 1989, 39,71.(McGilvary Centennial. Payap University, Chiang Mai). The centennial anniversary of theological education was celebrated in 1989. The name McGilvary Theological Seminary was used since 1923 until 1962 when it was changed to be Thailand Theological Seminary. At present it has become registered as a private university by the name Payap University with the theological faculty as one of its faculties. Apparently the Class of 1927-1930 was the first to use new curriculum. Charan Ratanabutra and Chulin Toktaeng mention that this was the first class at the Seminary. Suk Phongsnoi, Sonmuang Pinkaeu, Mai Suphaphan and Chulin Toktaeng were graduates from the same class at Bangkok Christian College. Boonmark Kittisarn and Inson Suphaphan were also graduates from the Bangkok Christian College. See: *Barnaba thi rak. Prakaithip – prakaittham, andab 2. Kong Khristian bannasarn, Krungthep. 2517 (1974)*, 1-5. (Dear Barnabas. A memorial publication of Rev. Suk Phongsnoi) The writers include Mrs. Thammada, Rev. Suk's wife, and Rev. Charan Ratanabutra and Rev. Chulin Toktaeng Suk Phongsnoi was that time 21 years old, Boonmark Kittisarn was already 30. Zehner states that Boonmark Kittisarn converted to Christianity at the age of 17 while a student at the Bangkok Christian College. His father was a police officer.

⁵³ In 1982 Chulin Toktaeng was the Associate Director for Christian Leadership Training of the World Vision Foundation of Thailand. Thailand's Christian Directory 1982,64. In 1946, Rev. Chulin and Rev. Boonmark were CCT delegates in a Planning Conference between the CCT, representatives of the Presbyterian Board, and some missionaries who had returned. Wells 1958, 168-170.

part of the country. Before that, Burmese Gospel teams had visited Thailand several times. After 1938, Boonmark Kittisarn became actively involved in the revival movement, which began in connection with the campaigns of Dr. John Sung, and was often considered the most outstanding leader of the movement. During the Second World War he traveled extensively, visiting congregations in Eastern and Northern Thailand as the General Secretary of the CCT, a position he held already in 1939.⁵⁴

During the war Rev. Boonmark's views became more radical. He began to baptize by immersion. When the first missionaries returned in January 1946, the conflict with Rev. Boonmark became apparent. In April 1946 he resigned from his position as the pastor of the Presbyterian Samyan (Second) Church in Bangkok, but still remained a member of the CCT. Half of the members followed him to establish a new church called the Samurana Church (from Smyrna according to Revelation 2), which in the beginning used the premises of the Bible Society. His hope was to organize this new church as a new local church within the framework of the CCT.⁵⁵

Boonmark Kittisarn openly criticized the missionaries when they returned. He proposed that the modernist missionaries should be called home, and fundamentalist missionaries be called to commence work in areas without prior Christian activities.⁵⁶

The post-war conflict has often been seen either as a struggle for personal power, or as a struggle between the progressive (or liberal) and fundamentalist (or conservative) factions of the CCT and the American Presbyterian Mission. Prasith Pongudom represents the former view, Edwin Zehner the latter. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, both the leadership of the CCT and the missionary body were divided. Boonmark Kittisarn considered himself the defender of the autonomy of the church against the missionaries. However, he also relied on the "fundamentalist" faction of the missionary body, and later on he made extensive use of the outside contacts in his ministry.⁵⁷ One issue seems to have been neglected. It should be emphasized that by receiving a rebaptism by immersion, Rev. Boonmark had in effect renounced his Presbyterian tradition and adopted a Baptist stand on the issue of baptism. If the missionaries and the leadership of the CCT wanted to keep up the Presbyterian tradition, a clash was unavoidable. The issue of baptism will be further discussed in chapter 4.2.5.

Apparently, Rev. Boonmark was hoping to persuade the entire CCT to follow his example. In reality, the issue was whether the CCT should remain a Presbyterian church or become a Fundamentalist/Baptist Church. Certainly, Boonmark Kittisarn was struggling to make the CCT independent from the dominance of the missionaries,

⁵⁴Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 1-3, 26, 48-49. Boonmark Kittisarn, A Chinese Evangelist. The Siam Outlook. Vol. XII, No 3, July 1936, 128-129. Wells 1958, 142, 146, 157, 161, 168. HERD #50.

⁵⁵Eakin, Survey report for Bangkok, 1946. Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 11, 78, 82-83. Charan Ratanabutra, Interview May 16, 1987. Smith 1982, 216.

⁵⁶Prasit Pongudom 1984, 114-121.

⁵⁷Zehner 1987, 53-55. Prasith Pongudom.

but in the process his thoughts had radicalized. He was leading the church in a direction which most of the his colleagues in the leadership of CCT and the returning missionaries felt very uneasy with. In addition, external contacts influenced his actions. The whole issue was not only the tension between the church and mission, but between an organized church and a radical revival movement.

When the CCT joined the World Council of Churches in 1948, Rev. Boonmark finally resigned from the CCT and organized an independent church called the Bangkok (Thai) Church. Boonmark Kittisarn was in contact with the International Council of Christian Churches, which was fighting against the World Council of Churches. This contact did not last a long time. The reason for the break with the International Council of Christian Churches was the teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit; Boonmark Kittisarn had adopted the Pentecostal stand on the issue.⁵⁸

In 1946 Rev. Boonmark became acquainted with Rev. Verner Raassina of the Pentecostal Finnish Free Foreign Mission, who arrived in Thailand with his family. They were planning to go to Burma, but could not get visas. During their first weeks in Bangkok they met Boonmark Kittisarn, who at one time invited them to stay at the school owned by his family.⁵⁹

For Boonmark Kittisarn, the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission, especially Verner Raassina, replaced Loren Hanna and the other “fundamentalist” Presbyterian missionaries with whom he had been co-operating during the 1938-1939 revival.⁶⁰ Apparently the contacts with the Pentecostal missionaries and the International Council of Christian Churches encouraged Boonmark Kittisarn to leave the CCT.

A special relationship was formed between the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission and Boonmark Kittisarn. He encouraged the Raassinans to stay in Thailand and his contacts with the Finnish Pentecostals remained close after the Raassinans moved to Phetsaboon Province, where Rev. Boonmark himself had been preaching as a young man. Boonmark Kittisarn's name is mentioned frequently in books about the work of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission as a coworker, in the same

⁵⁸Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 82, 125-127. Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16,1987. Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok, 1946. Wells 1958, 172.

⁵⁹Reijo Vaurula-Veikko Ontermä, V.O. Raassina - lähetyspioneeri. RV-kirjat, Vantaa. 1988, 63-71. The book is a biography of Verner Raassina. Unto Kunnas, Valkoisen elefantin maa. Ristin Voitto, Tikkurila. 1973, 124-125. Kunnas uses the name Markus for Boonmark Kittisarn. Kunnas' recording is based on an interview with Verner Raassina in Thailand. Kunnas was that at time the mission secretary of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission. Elis Pehkonen, Thaimaa, hymyn maa. Ristin Voitto, Tikkurila. 1967, 87. The Pehkonens arrived in Thailand for the first time in 1950. The book contains his memoirs.

⁶⁰Verner Raassina recalls that before retiring, Loren Hanna came to visit his family encouraging them to stay in Thailand. Vaurula - Ontermä 1988, 77.

category as the missionaries.⁶¹

Apparently no formal agreement of co-operation was made. Until 1956 Rev. Boonmark was largely acting on his own; records on the involvement of the Bangkok Church with the Pentecostal missionaries are not available.

T. L. Osborn, an American Pentecostal preacher, held an evangelistic campaign in Thailand in 1956 on Verner Raassina's invitation. The meetings were to be held at Sanam Luang, "the largest open ground in the City". Just hours before the meetings were to begin, the permission was withdrawn. The meetings were moved to the Christian school owned by Mrs. Muan Kittisarn, wife of Boonmark Kittisarn. The meetings caused great interest, and became the beginning of the more extensive influence of the Pentecostal movement in Thailand. Meetings were also held in Trang in Southern Thailand. The campaign was criticized, and finally Osborn was asked to leave the country. He returned later, at least in 1959. Osborn's assistant Don Price stayed in Thailand, and their organization was supporting national evangelists and arranging movie evangelism for several years. It is not clear how long Price stayed in Thailand. After his departure he arranged support for the Pentecostal ministry in Thailand. In 1962 or 1963 he returned with his family, but after one and a half years, he was diagnosed with cancer and died.⁶²

Between 1956-1959 Rev. Boonmark's church, the Bangkok Church, was the center of the Pentecostal movement in Thailand. Osborn's organization provided funds for building a chapel on land owned by Rev. Boonmark's family. The second Pentecostal national conference was held there in August 1958.⁶³

In the late 1950s Rev. Boonmark established an organization called *Sahaphan Khrischak Thai* which could mean "Thai Federation of Churches" or "Association of Free Churches". It was a loose fellowship consisting of local congregations that he had contacts with. So far, I have not been able to locate any original records or documents

⁶¹Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 76-77,174. Boonmark Kittisarn introduced Raassina's first co-worker and administered the funeral service of the late Mrs. Hanna Raassina in September 1956. Raassina's youngest son, Pekka Boonmark was named after Boonmark Kittisarn. He was born on the same day Boonmark Kittisarn left for Finland in 1959. Kunnas 1973, 120-126. Pehkonen 1967, 87.

⁶²Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 108-115, 179-181, 261. Pehkonen 1967, 84-87. There was a plan to invite Billy Graham to Thailand, but these plans had to be postponed. Raassina had learned of the campaigns of T.L. Osborn in Africa and Indonesia and wrote to him inviting him to Thailand. They did not know each other personally. A Biography of Verner Raassina in English was published in 1974: Ervin A. Shaffer, Missions - Thailand. Under the Shade of the Coconut Palms. Thai Gospel Press. Bangkok. 1974. On the campaign of T.L. Osborn: Shaffer 1974, 32-34. In literature there are attempts to place the meetings to a later date, but these are incorrect. Smith suggests the early 1960s. Smith 1982, 252. Zehner claims that Price started in Thailand 1962. The Finnish sources are clear in stating that Price stayed in Thailand when Osborn left, and he was arranging support for the Pentecostal ministry in Thailand before his return. Vaurula Ontermaa 1988,114-118, 225. Zehner 1988, 57.

⁶³Pehkonen 1967, 97. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 158-161.

of the organization. No statistics are available. Zehner gives the most extensive presentation.⁶⁴

The *Sahaphan* was an unstructured fellowship. Even the exact date of establishment is not known. When Charan Ratanabutra returned to Thailand in 1959, the *Sahaphan* already existed, and he was made the General Secretary. However, Boonmark Kittisarn took care of most of the administrative work. The *Sahaphan* consisted of some independent churches and local churches which still belonged to the CCT and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. All that can be established for certain is that by 1959, the *Sahaphan* had a name, an office, an official staff of at least one, and regular membership meetings conducted by Boonmark Kittisarn.⁶⁵

Establishing the *Sahaphan* falls into the same period with the first expansion of the Pentecostal movement. Boonmark Kittisarn was again building his own base of support acting “as an evangelist, organizer and as extra-denominational point of access to foreign evangelists and expertise”. Zehner uses the patron – client concept from studies on the Thai social organization to explain Boonmark Kittisarn’s seemingly erratic dealings with foreigners.⁶⁶

The *Sahaphan* was very much Boonmark Kittisarn’s personal enterprise. He was co-operating closely with the Finnish Pentecostals, but the Finns were not involved in the *Sahaphan*. They were strictly following the congregationalist principle of the autonomy of the local church, and certainly looked upon any structures above the local congregation with suspicion.⁶⁷

Boonmark Kittisarn was invited to visit Finland in 1959. He addressed the National Summer Conference of the Pentecostal movement in Kouvola. The impression given by him and the missionaries was that he was one of the Pentecostal leaders in Thailand.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Zehner 1987, 55-57. In 1953 Charan Ratanabutr was preparing to leave for further studies at Bob Jones University in the USA. See: *Barnaba thi rak*, 53,54. The university was born as a part of the fundamentalist movement. See: Marsden 1982, 194.

⁶⁵ Zehner 1987, 55-57.

⁶⁶ Zehner 1987, 61-65. Quote from page 63-64.

⁶⁷ Because of emphasis on the autonomy of the local church, the Pentecostal movement has not been willing to be registered as a religious community in Finland. The local congregations have been registered under the law on free associations, and they have total autonomy. For practical reasons, the Finnish Free Foreign Mission has been registered as a separate association for mission work. The discussion concerning the registration of the Pentecostal movement as a religious community has been going on for some time. In the beginning of the year 2000 a proposal made by the preachers’ fellowship to register the Pentecostal movement as a religious community was made public. See also Lauri Ahonen, Missions Growth. A case Study on Finnish Free Foreign Mission. William Carey Library. Pasadena, California. 1984, 38-39.

On his way back to Thailand Rev. Boonmark visited the United States of America, where he came into contact with the United Pentecostal Church and its "Jesus only" doctrine. It is difficult to document exactly how this connection was established, but T. L. Osborn and Don Price were said to have previously been members of that movement. According to Boonmark Kittisarn himself, he was staying with Don Price, who after a while wanted him to return to Thailand. Rev. Boonmark gives the impression that he himself took the initiative to contact the United Pentecostal Church, and continued his stay in the USA with the UPC. The length of his stay in America is not mentioned, but most likely it took several months. According to the teaching of the United Pentecostal Church, only a baptism given in the name of Jesus is valid. Rev. Boonmark was re-baptized, and he invited missionaries of the United Pentecostal Church to Thailand.⁶⁹

In Thailand, Rev. Boonmark tried to convince the Bangkok Church and the entire *Sahaphan* to follow him to establish the United Pentecostal Church of Thailand. William Cole of the United Pentecostal Church came to Thailand. Nishimoto states that this took place in 1964, but this must be too late. Cole stayed for a short time, at most three years, but may have returned later for shorter visits. About half of the members of the Bangkok Church followed Boonmark Kittisarn, and the others stayed. Those who stayed did not continue the relationship with the Pentecostal movement. Charan Ratanabutra, the son-in-law of Rev. Boonmark, became the new pastor of the Bangkok Church. The *Sahaphan* was divided. The events in Chiang Rai have been recorded, but similar divisions took place also in other parts of the country. The campaign to establish United Pentecostal local churches was successful in some areas, but the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission were able to restrict his influence. Smith emphasizes the role of William Cole in establishing the United Pentecostal Church, but in reality it was Boonmark Kittisarn who was the leader in Thailand. Cole provided funds and was important as the link to overseas supporters, but without Boonmark Kittisarn he could do very little.⁷⁰

⁶⁸According to the conference reports, Boonmark Kittisarn went as far as claiming to be a result of the work of the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries. Quote from the report: "Olen kiittämässä teitä kouvolaalaiset siitä, että lähetitte meille evankeliumin valon. Minäkin olen teidän lannistumattoman työnne hedelmä." Risto Hermonen, Merkkitaipauksia seurakunnassa. Kouvolan helluntaiseurakunta Betania. 50, 1930-1980. Toim. Aulis Jokivuori. Julk. Kouvolan Betaniaseurakunta. Kouvola. 1980, 70. (50 years anniversary publication of the Bethania Church in Kouvola) How much of this remark should be counted as politeness is not sure. Raassina was supported by the Pentecostal Bethania Church of Kouvola. All of the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission evidently did not trust Boonmark Kittisarn completely. Afterwards there were some feelings of having been betrayed.

⁶⁹Smith 1982, 252. Nishimoto 1996, 190. Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 127-129 Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987. On the beginning of the Jesus only movement: Walter J Hollenweger, The Pentecostals. SCM Press, London. 1972, 31-32, 71. D. William Faupel, The Everlasting Gospel. The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought. Sheffield Academic Press. 1996, 270-306. Kettunen states that Boonmark's visit took place in 1962. Kettunen 1996, 96. Raassina recalls that Rev Boonmark continued directly from Finland to the USA in 1959. Vaurula –Ontermaa 1988, 264.

The co-operation between Boonmark Kittisarn and the United Pentecostal Church continued only for some years. He resigned from active ministry. At one point Boonmark Kittisarn proposed to lead the Pentecostal movement back to the CCT. It is difficult to verify the date and motivation for this move. Finally, even Rev. Boonmark himself did not join the CCT. When he remarried, he joined the Seventh Day-Adventists because his new wife was an Adventist. However, he himself had been in contact with the Adventists already during the post-war years, when he was invited to become their co-worker. According to Nishimoto, Chaiyong Watthanachan became the president of the United Pentecostal Church in 1965. He proposed a new Thai name for the group, *Sahapentecost nai Prathet Thai*.⁷¹

Suk Phongsnoi

Suk (Sook) Phongsnoi's (1906-1972) name is often mentioned among the EFT member organizations. He was a close friend and colleague of Boonmark Kittisarn. I have not been able to find any comprehensive studies of his life and ministry. The Christian and Missionary Alliance published a commemorative book in Thai in 1973.⁷² This book contains the main biographical facts and some reprints of his published articles.

Suk Phongsnoi was born in Phetchaburi Province, about a hundred kilometers south of Bangkok in a Buddhist family. He attended a Christian school in Phetchaburi and then the Bangkok Christian College. He became a Christian in Phetchaburi. In 1927-1930 he belonged to the same class with Boonmark Kittisarn at the McGilvary Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. After his graduation, the Phongsnoi family moved to Bangkok where Rev. Suk became the pastor of the Second Church for seven years. The Church moved in 1933 to its present location in Samyan, and Rev. Suk's wife Thammada opened a school in the old location. In 1936, the Phongsnoi family moved to Trang in the South, and Mrs. Muan Kittisarn took over the school.⁷³

⁷⁰Ruohomäki 1988, 72-76. Smith 1982, 252. Nishimoto 1996, 190.

⁷¹Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 20. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 199, 262-266. Nishimoto 1996, 190. The Finnish Pentecostal missionaries have frequently told that Boonmark Kittisarn wanted to lead the Pentecostal churches back to the CCT. I have doubted this information. Verner Raassina gives a rather detailed account of a meeting arranged by Boonmark Kittisarn where joining the CCT was discussed. In this connection, no exact date is given, but from the context it is possible to conclude that this meeting took place earliest in the beginning of 1963. The editors of Raassina's biography conclude that Boonmark Kittisarn was acting out of guilt. He had been wrong in leading a large group of people to Pentecostalism. Chaiyong Watthanachan admits, that Boonmark Kittisarn wanted to return to the CCT, but does not give any date. In my understanding, the discussion on joining the CCT must have taken place after the co-operation with the UPC had continued for some time. If it took place e.g. in 1964, Raassina's involvement at that late stage is a surprise. Was Boonmark Kittisarn still hoping that he could persuade his old friend to support his latest move? It seems that Raassina had not been actively involved in the Jesus Only dispute. He had been in Finland 1960-1962.

⁷²*Barnaba thi rak 1974.*

In 1938, while serving as the pastor of the church in Trang, Rev. Suk was asked to interpret at Dr. John Sung's revival meetings. The meetings made a deep impact on him, and according to Mrs. Thammada, Rev. Suk changed his working methods. He stopped making home visits and stayed at home, read the Bible and prayed. In the evenings he left for the church and stayed there alone the whole night praying and reading Bible.⁷⁴

When the Second World War broke, the Japanese landed in the South, in Nakhorn Sri Thammarat and Songkhla. The properties owned by foreigners, both private and the property of the Mission, were confiscated. Some Christians were arrested. Rev. Suk went to help one arrested family, and got arrested as well, and was brought to court for instigating rebellion. He defended himself on the grounds that he had no weapons. Finally, after 33 days, he was released.⁷⁵

After the War, Rev. Suk was asked to be the representative to receive the church and school property in Nakorn Sri Thammarat. Rev. Suk was called to be the pastor of the church and Mrs. Thammada became the head teacher and manager of the school. In 1951-1952 he received a scholarship from the CCT and the Presbyterian Mission for studies at San Anselmo College in California.⁷⁶

After returning from the USA, Rev. Suk wanted to move to Bangkok. Mrs. Thammada appears to have been reluctant. By leaving Nakhon Sri Thammarat Rev. Suk left the CCT, his former spiritual home as well. Written sources are lacking, but it seems evident that the move was connected to Boonmark Kittisarn's ministry. Rev. Boonmark had probably asked his closest associate to move to Bangkok. When Boonmark Kittisarn left the CCT, he was co-operating with the International Council of Christian Churches. This co-operation came to an end after some years when Rev. Boonmark adopted the Pentecostal understanding on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

⁷³Charan Ratabutr and Chulin Toktaeng in *Barnaba thi rak 1974*, 1-4. Thammada Phongsnoi in *Barnaba thi rak*, 1974, 25, 27-33. The father was a carpenter and goldsmith. Young Suk was partly raised in a family of relatives. In Phetchaburi he often argued about religious matters with the teachers. When Rev. John A. Eakin, the manager of the school took good care of him during an illness, he was deeply impressed and finally received Christ.

⁷⁴*Barnaba thi rak 1974*, 30-33. Mrs. Thammada does not mention John Sung's second visit in Thailand, when he went to Trang as well. Neither does she mention whether the all-night prayers were due to Dr. Sung's example or Rev. Suk's own initiative. However, he had participated in the campaigns of Paul Lin and had been arranging the "house parties". Thus he was familiar with meetings with a strong emphasis on personal experience. After a while, members who had left the church started to return little by little and finally there were non-Christians who wanted to become baptized. In the first baptismal service 47 persons, both adults and children were baptized. The revival continued for a while. *Barnaba thi rak*, 1974, 25, 27-33.

⁷⁵A detailed account on the arrest is given by Mrs. Thammada. During the War the family supported themselves by selling rice. See *Barnaba thi rak 1974*, 40-49.

⁷⁶*Barnaba thi rak 1974*, 7, 53-54.

Most likely he was still co-operating with the ICCC when he asked Rev. Suk to come to Bangkok in order to expand the work there. However, the co-operation with the ICCC came to an end, and the Phongsnoi family was forced to take care of themselves as best they could. For a while both spouses were without permanent work. For about ten months Rev. Suk taught English and took care of the morning prayers at Mrs. Muan Kittisarn's school. Charan Ratanabutra, Boonmark and Muan Kittisarn's son-in-law, who at that time was working as the head teacher in another school, was leaving for further studies at Bob Jones University in the USA. Mrs. Thammada replaced him in July 1953. Rev. Suk was called by the Southern Baptists (Thailand Baptist Mission) to work as an evangelist first in Ayutthaya and after 1955 in Bangkok.⁷⁷

Some time later Rev. Boonmark asked Rev. Suk to interpret in the campaign of T. L. Osborn. This led to a conflict with the Baptists. The sequence of events is not exactly clear, but finally Rev. Suk was again without permanent work, and the family had to find a new place to stay. After a while, the Christian and Missionary Alliance called Rev. Suk to preach in various CMA congregations. At one time, the CMA, in co-operation with the Far East Broadcasting Company, started to record his sermons to be broadcast by the FEBC.⁷⁸

After T.L. Osborn's campaign in 1956, Suk Phongsnoi began to distance himself from Boonmark Kittisarn and the Pentecostal movement. He remained to some extent sympathetic toward the Pentecostals. He was occasionally invited to preach in the Pentecostal churches, but at the same time he criticized the Pentecostal style of worship. Finally, when Boonmark Kittisarn began to spread the new "Jesus only" doctrine, he had to stand publicly against his old friend.⁷⁹

The campaign of T. L. Osborn became a turning point in the ministry of Suk Phongsnoi. After that he did not associate himself with any denomination or organization, but continued as an independent evangelist. The agreement with the CMA seems to have been an *ad hoc* arrangement. His fame as a radio evangelist began to grow, and he became a kind of role model for a generation of younger leaders

⁷⁷*Barnaba thi rak* 1974, 54-59

⁷⁸Ibid, 59-61. According to Mrs. Thammada, Rev Suk resigned from the Southern Baptists and applied to work with a new organization, but to his disappointment was finally rejected. Nishimoto states that Suk Phongsnoi acted as interpreter in Osborn's campaign. Nishimoto 1996,174. At that time, the Far Eastern Broadcasting Company was broadcasting from Manila, the Philippines.

⁷⁹Nishimoto quotes a favorable report by Suk Phongsnoi about T.L.Osborn's preaching. Nishimoto 1996, 174. However, this must be seen as an attempt to legitimate the Pentecostal movement by using the name of a respected leader. In an article written in 1960, Suk Phongsnoi criticizes those who demand the Pentecostal style of worship for all. In another article from 1966 he clearly rejects re-baptisms. During his illness in 1962 he instructed his wife to take his body to Bangkok Church if he dies. See *Barnaba thi rak* 1974, 6-8, 63-64, 103-116. The Finnish Pentecostal sources are almost totally silent about Suk Phongsnoi. In contrast, Boonmark Kittisarn is mentioned also in reports written after his break with the Finns. Zehner does not mention Suk Phongsnoi in connection to Boonmark Kittisarn's *Sahaphan*.

within the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. For a long time, he did not attempt, unlike Boonmark Kittisarn, to build an organized personal following. Rev. Suk became known as a man who does not care about the denominational differences, *mai thue khana nikai*. This slogan was very popular in the 1970s and 1980s. Possibly the slogan originates from Rev. Suk.

Suk Phongsnoi managed to initiate a new kind of co-operation among the Protestant community. His role was crucial in establishing the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. The peak in his ministry came at the most controversial time of the history of the church. The era was characterized by confusion and bitter fighting between the various organizations, and also confusion and division within the already existing denominations, most notably the CCT. The establishment of the EFT differed from Boonmark Kittisarn's *Sahaphan*. The *Sahaphan* was based on Rev. Boonmark's personal influence. Suk Phongsnoi was a central figure in the EFT, but the whole structure was based on the willingness of the various groups to co-operate. Time was ripe for co-operation.

During a visit to Korat in June 1962 Rev. Suk became seriously ill. The illness became a spiritual experience. Prayer chains were organized in Thailand and abroad. Rev. Suk himself was convinced that God had given him ten years more time, and because of the short time given to him, he worked hard. Finally he passed away ten years later, on June 1, 1972.⁸⁰

Independent churches related to Boonmark Kittisarn's ministry

There are several independent churches whose origins can be traced to the ministry of Boonmark Kittisarn and his associates. The Bangkok Church is a direct continuation of his personal ministry; others are connected to his associates. The numbers in brackets refer to the list of independent churches given by the EFT Office in 1999. This list is presented as Appendix 1.

Bangkok Church (3)

The Bangkok Church is the oldest of the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The church was established in 1948, and for almost twenty years, it was the only organized independent church in Bangkok. In 1987, the membership was about 300, and attendance at the worship service was about 100-150. The founding pastor was Boonmark Kittisarn, who died in 1987. After he joined the United Pentecostal Church, his son-in law Rev. Charan Ratanabutra became the new pastor.⁸¹

⁸⁰*Barnaba thi rak* 1974, 63-69.

⁸¹Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987

Charan Ratanabutra was born in 1923 in Ratchaburi Province in Central Thailand in a Buddhist family. His biographical facts presented here are based on a collection of biographies of Christian leaders published in 1994 by Thai Mission, Zehner's interview in 1998, and author's interview in 1987. Charan Ratanabutra was a student at the Bangkok Christian College, and he attended the campaigns of John Sung at Maitrichit Church. During the meetings he received Christ and was baptized by Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn in Samyan (Second) Church of the CCT by sprinkling. He married Rev. Boonmark's daughter Phirun. In 1949 he joined the evangelistic team of the Samurana Church (later Bangkok Church). During this time he felt that he had not yet really converted. He repented and was re-baptized by immersion at Maitrichit Church.⁸²

Charan Ratanabutra served as the head teacher of a school run by Maitrichit Church. In the 1950s he studied at the Bob Jones University in California receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree returning in Thailand in 1959. He became the General secretary of the *Sahapan Khrischak Thai* but Rev. Boonmark took care of most of the administrative work. This position was obviously not a full-time position.⁸³

Dr. Charan became the chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand after the death of Rev. Suk Phongsnoi in 1972. He remained in this position until 1996. As the chairman of the EFT he has been a central person in promoting co-operation among the EFT member organizations, and in the Protestant community in general. He has received an honorary doctorate from the International University in California.⁸⁴

In 1999, the Bangkok Church was facing a change in leadership. In the Thailand Christian Directory, Dr. Charan was still listed as the pastor, but he was retiring and Dr. Direk Arayakosol, who is married to Dr. Charan's wife's younger sister, had assumed the actual leadership. Dr. Charan maintains the position of the senior pastor.⁸⁵

The Bangkok Church, as the oldest of the independent urban churches, represents the established or mature independent church. Some other churches will probably go through similar phases. It started as a splinter church; the founding members did not join by conversion but by transfer. The result was a social conglomerate church. In the

⁸²*Thamniab kham phayan chivit '94*. Thai Mission, Bangkok. 1994, 15-17. This book contains short biographies of 42 Christian leaders, both Roman Catholic and Protestant in Thai. It is published by a private company initiated by members of the Roman Catholic Church. There was a plan to continue the series. Charan Ratanabutra, interview.

⁸³Zehner 1987, 55-57. *Thamniab...* 1994, 16. When Charan Ratanabutra left for studies in America, Mrs Thammada Phongsnoi became to replace him as the head teacher. After returning from America Rev. Charan reportedly served as the assistant pastor of the Maitrichit Church. Bob Jones University has been seen as part of the fundamentalist movement in America. See: Marsden 1982, 193-195.

⁸⁴*Thamniab...* 1994, 15-17. *Prawat kham pen ma khong Sahakit Khristian nai Prathet Thai* 1987.

⁸⁵Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 39.

1970s and 1980s, the Bangkok Church suffered occasional loss of membership to other, mostly new Pentecostal, churches.⁸⁶

There are reports that the change of leadership has led to some division in the church. Some members of the Santisuk nai Phra Khrist Church joined the Bangkok Church when the church was disbanded (See Chapter 3.3.1.). Their children left the Bangkok Church to reopen a new church using the old name Santisuk nai Phra Khrist. The Bangkok Church did not accept the new church as a daughter church.⁸⁷

Until 1959, the work followed the principle of the autonomy of a local church. Boonmark Kittisarn traveled extensively. Groups of believers were apparently born in connection to these trips, but these groups were not connected to the Bangkok Church. Later, the Bangkok Church has established at least one daughter church in Hua Hin, 200 kilometers south of Bangkok, but connection between the daughter church and the mother church does not seem to be close.

The processes that the Bangkok Church has gone through are not uncommon in the Protestant community. These processes were caused mainly by the mobility of members and the highly personalized leadership patterns. When new members come through transfer, they often come as groups. This can lead to a factionalized church. As long as the dynamic growth continues, the leadership can keep the factions together. When the growth stagnates, the leadership faces difficulties. When there are changes in the leadership, the old factions may be revitalized or new factions may emerge, leading to a power struggle or defections.

The Bangkok Church does not have its own confessional statement, but uses that of the EFT. It was one of the first local church members of the EFT.⁸⁸ Theologically it can be seen representing a type of evangelical eclecticism.

The Chiang Mai Thai Church (14) and Hua Rin Thai Church (15)

There are reports of independent churches born in other parts of the country as a result of the ministry of Rev. Boonmark and his associates. Zehner states that some of the churches that joined the *Sahaphan* added the word “*thai*” to their names at least for a

⁸⁶About twenty members left for the Romyen Church, ten for the Jai Samarn Church, and some for the Romkiao Church. When the Hope of Bangkok Church was established, the members of the Bangkok Church were invited to join. About ten left. Afterwards they came back to criticize the Bangkok Church and to invite more to join the Hope of Bangkok Church. Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987.

⁸⁷Interview with Wichien Watkicharoen 7.7.1999. Dr. Wichien was later asked to be an advisor to the new church.

⁸⁸Charan Ratanabutra, interview on May 16, 1987. The Bangkok Church joined the EFT February 14, 1970. EFT *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 43.

time.⁸⁹ There are local churches with the word “*thai*” in their names, especially in the North. The origin of some of them can be traced to the ministry of Boonmark Kittisarn and his associates.

The Chiang Mai Thai Church (Khrischak Thai Chiang Mai) was established around 1950 by Rev. Boonmee Rungruengwong, one of the leaders of the pre-Second World War revival and a friend of Boonmark Kittisarn. His election as the pastor of the Chiang Mai First Church in 1940 finally made visible the division caused by Dr. John Sung’s campaign. His co-operation with Boonmark Kittisarn continued even after the Pentecostal revival in 1956 but the relationship was not as close as earlier. By 1997 the church had almost ceased to exist; some relatives of the late Rev. Boonmee still gathered in the house owned by Mr. Somthawee Chaininphan, a son of his daughter. There were no signs indicating that the house was a place of worship. The church was led by an elder. The ministry of Rev. Boonmee has better survived in a daughter church in Hua Rin, about 30 kilometers from the city. In 1997 it had 120 members and was a member of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. In 1999 both churches were still registered as independent member churches of the EFT.⁹⁰

Rev. Boonmee was an active writer. After his death his library was donated to the Payap University Archives where preparations were made for filing in 1999. At that time it was not yet clear how much of his writings have survived. I received some of his writings from Mr. Somthawee. The writings are important as evidence of the thinking of the earlier Thai Christians.

Samchuk Church (5) and its daughter churches

The origins of the Samchuk Church and its daughter churches can be traced to the ministry of Boonmark Kittisarn and his associates. The church was established in the middle of the 1950s on the initiative of the Bangkok Church, using a school as the basis. Later there have been connections to several mission agencies, including the Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade (WEC). At one time, Rev. Wan Phetchsongram of Romkiao Church was involved in evangelism in the area. Since 1962, Mr. Akira Nagahara, an independent Japanese missionary, has been involved with the church.⁹¹

⁸⁹Zehner 1987, 55.

⁹⁰Author’s observations and interview with Mr. Somthawee Chaininphan March 24, 1997. EFT office 1999. The churches did not answer the 1999 survey. Interview with Mr. Chayong Wathanachang July 13, 1999.

⁹¹EFT Seminar on church planting. May 19,1987. YWCA, Bangkok. Author’s notes from a presentation by Samchuk Church. It was mentioned that the initiative was taken by the Bangkok Church. It was mentioned that Mrs. Phirun Ratanabutr was the first head teacher in 1954. In the 1999 survey the connection to Bangkok Church is not mentioned. The name of the first head teacher was given as Pradong Suwanprathep in 1955.

The Samchuk Church is located in one of the *amphoes* of Suphanburi province, on the Central Plains of Thailand. Until the end of the 1980s Samchuk Church experienced a rather dynamic growth, which took place in the form of establishing daughter churches in Suphanburi Province. In 1986 the number of daughter churches was informed to be five. In 1987, Samchuk church was considered a model church among the churches located outside the provincial centers. It was one of the very few rural or small-town churches, which have been able to establish daughter churches. It was announced in 1986 that Samchuck Church had 58 members, and attendance in the worship services was about 25 persons. By 1999, the growth had slackened. There were 5 daughter churches as earlier. It is not possible to determine whether these are the same as in 1986. The membership of the mother church was informed to be 20, with one baptism in 1998. This means that the church has lost members during the 1990s. It is possible that this loss is due to the migration to Bangkok and other larger cities. The EFT has registered Thaweephon Church (60), one of the daughter churches, as an independent church. Rev. Silawej, the Chairman of the EFT, estimated that it has 50 members. I estimate that the other daughter churches have 20 members each. This makes the whole Samchuk community 150 members.⁹²

The United Pentecostal Church

Since its establishment, the United Pentecostal church has been living in an almost total isolation from the other Pentecostal groups and the entire Protestant community. Because of the clear connections to a foreign organization at least in the beginning, the church is not included in the statistical presentation of the independent churches.

A church called Khrischak Thai Wiang Chiang Rai is situated in the town of Chiang Rai. Mr. Somthawee of the Chiang Mai Thai Church stated that it belonged to the same group as Khrischak Thai Chiang Mai, and that both Rev. Suk Phongnoi and Boonmark Kittisarn were involved in its early years.

It seems obvious that the reports of independent churches in Chiang Rai province refer to the Pentecostal revival after 1956. The Khrischak Thai Wiang Chiang Rai belongs to the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand, which is in co-operation with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission. Several other local churches with the term Thai in their names in Chiang Rai province belong to the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand. Both Ruohomäki and Kettunen deal with events in Chiang Rai rather extensively. Kim writes about the events critically from the point of view of the CCT. Nishimoto records information given by Chaiyong Watthanachan. In July 1999, I had the

⁹²EFT survey 1986. Questionnaire 1999. Author's notes May 19, 1987. Information given by Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda. The names of the daughter churches given in 1987 and 1999 are different. Most of the names of the daughter churches seem to refer to location, but there are also names that do not refer to the location, like Barn Phra Jesu, which means The House of Lord Jesus. It is possible that some of the daughter churches were the same in 1987 and 1999. In 1999 the names of the daughter churches were given as Thaweephon Church, Walen Church, Barn Phra Jesu Church, Barn Srakrajon Church and Barn Thung Natapin Church.

opportunity to meet with Mr. Chaiyong Wattanachan in his home in Bangkok. The controversy will be dealt from the doctrinal point of view in Chapter 4.2.5; here, only the basic historical facts will be given.

After T. L. Osborn's campaign in 1956, Chaiyong Wattanachan and Samarn Wannakiat, who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit during the meetings, went to Chiang Rai. At that time there were only CCT congregations in Chiang Rai. A division took place. Those who had received the new message were re-baptized by immersion, and they established new local churches. The church in the town center took the name Khrischak Thai Wiang Chiang Rai. Between 1956-1959 Boonmark Kittisarn together with the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries visited Chiang Rai frequently. For Boonmark Kittisarn the events in Chiang Rai were apparently part of building up the *Sahaphan*.⁹³

When Rev. Boonmark returned from the USA he started to spread his "Jesus only" doctrine and advocated rebaptisms, this time in the name of Jesus. He was active especially in Chiang Rai. The Finnish Pentecostals felt strongly that he was causing division among the Pentecostals. Mr. Aleksi Tynkkynen, a relatively new missionary in Thailand started to oppose him, and was quite successful. During his furlough Rev. Boonmark was more successful. Finally the Pentecostal churches were split, and those following Boonmark Kittisarn were organized into new local churches.⁹⁴

Those who followed Boonmark Kittisarn to the United Pentecostal Church again felt that it was the missionaries who were causing division. The Pentecostals in Chiang Rai looked upon Boonmark Kittisarn as their spiritual leader. When he endorsed a new doctrine and practice, they were willing to follow. From their point of view, the missionaries were causing division by challenging his leadership.⁹⁵

According to Mr Praphan Wongyai, there are about 50 members in the United Pentecostal church (*Sahakhrischak Pentecost Chiang Rai*) in Chiang Rai town. There are also congregations in Wiang Chai and Mae Sai, both located in Chiang Rai province. Nishimoto, quoting information originally given by Chaiyong Wattanachan, states that there are 62 congregations in the United Pentecostal Church

⁹³Ruohomäki 1988,73. Kettunen 1996, 88-91. Mr. Samarn was a member of a Presbyterian church and Mr Chaiyong was baptized by Rev. Boonmark. Ruohomäki mentions Mr. Chaiyong as member of a Baptist church. He himself however stated that he was baptized by Boonmark Kittisarn. After baptism he had very little contact with the church for 4 years. His family members, ethnically of mixed background (grandparents Chinese, Mon and Lao) were Christians, some of them originally Anglicans. After Osborn's campaign Mr. Chaiyong claims to have gone to see some CCT leaders who wanted to send him to study in Chiang Mai. He did not want to study for four years. Interview July 13, 1999.

⁹⁴Ruohomäki 1988, 105-106.

⁹⁵I visited the Chiang Rai United Pentecostal Church on April 4, 1999, with Rev. Visanukorn Upama, a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand who had recently moved to Chiang Rai to open a new work there. At the Church we met with Mr. Praphan Wongyai, the pastor of the church and some members. We were shown a photograph taken at the dedication service of the church building April 20, 1960. It was stated that Verner Raassina was one of the persons present.

with 14,000 members in all. Most of the congregations are in the North. Ethnically, the congregations include Thais and several minority groups. In July 1999, Mr. Chaiyong stated that there are 50 congregations with 50-100 members in each, in the northeastern provinces as well. This means that the total membership is somewhere between 2500 to 5000. He claimed that altogether the church has baptized more than 10,000 persons.⁹⁶

3.2.2. Church of God (16)

The Church of God is considered an independent church within the EFT. However, the English-language information clearly demonstrates the connection to the Church of God (Anderson). Apparently there were two sets of reasons that led to establishing the Church of God in Thailand. For Rev. Dr. Wichien Watkicharoen, the founding pastor of the church, the reason was the developments within the CCT. For the missionaries, Wichien Watkicharoen's dissatisfaction with the CCT and his loss of status in the leadership of the CCT gave an opportunity to persuade him to join the Church of God.

Wichien Watkicharoen belongs to the same spiritual tradition as Boonmark Kittisarn and his associates. Born in the 1920s he belongs to a younger generation than Rev. Boonmark. Actually, as a young man he had attended Rev. Boonmark's meetings but disagreed with him in several questions. He has spoken favorably about Rev. Suk Phongsnoi in several occasions. Similarly to them, he has emphasized the necessity of evangelism.⁹⁷

Wichien Watkicharoen was among the first students to attend the McGilvary Theological Seminary when it was re-opened in 1949. He became the pastor of the Second Church (Samyan) in Bangkok like Boonmark Kittisarn and Suk Phongsnoi. His ministry there was fruitful, the church quadrupled its membership in five years. He developed a program for the youth work of the CCT together with Rev. John L. Eakin in the 1950s. He was elected as the General Secretary the CCT in 1971. In 1974, he lost the re-election. Dr. Kosol Srisang, considered theologically liberal or radical and politically leftist, was elected as the General Secretary.⁹⁸

⁹⁶Nishimoto 1996, 190-191. Chaiyong Watthanachan, interview July 13, 1999. Mr. Chaiyong claimed that the churches are self-supporting. He himself receives only support for travelling. The names and addresses of the congregations are not made available to outsiders. Smith estimated that the United Pentecostal Church had members as follows: 350 in 1974, 490 in 1975 and 490 in 1979. See: Smith 1982, 252, 253.

⁹⁷Interview with Wichien Watkicharoen July 7, 1999.

⁹⁸Wells 1958, 180, 189. Prasith Pongudom 1984, 175. Kim 1976, 143-144 *Raigan karn upatham sasana uen 2525* (1982), 185-186. According to Prasith Pongudom, Rev. Wichien was elected the General Secretary of the CCT for two terms, 1971-1974 and 1975-1977. However, the second term must be Prasith Pongudom's mistake. According to the minutes of the General Assembly of the CCT, December 1-6, 1974, Wichien Watkicharoen was defeated in the elections for the Moderator and for the General Secretary. Dr. Kosol was elected as the General Secretary. *Raigan Karn prachum Sapha*

Some time later Dr. Wichien resigned from the CCT and became the leader of the ministry of the Church of God in Thailand. He served also as the Vice-Chairman of the EFT. After his retirement from the leadership of the Church of God, he has been an active lecturer at various theological institutes and has been invited to advise new congregations.

According to Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda, the present pastor of the Church of God and the Chairman of the EFT since 1996, a small group of ministers considering themselves evangelicals were dissatisfied with developments in the CCT, and resigned in 1975. The exact date is not given. This group included Wichien Watkicharoen and Silawej Kanjanamukhda. Rev. Silawej, born in the 1940s belongs to a younger generation than Dr. Wichien. The list of names of those who resigned from the CCT is not available.⁹⁹

The resignation of Wichien Watkicharoen and Silawej Kanjanamukhda from the CCT was part of a controversy that developed within the CCT after 1970. This controversy should be seen in the context of international and domestic theological and political events. A theological polarization took place within the churches related to the World Council of Churches after two conferences: the General Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala 1968, and the Bangkok Assembly of the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC in 1973. The CCT, being a member of the World Council of Churches, was affected by this polarization.¹⁰⁰

As was mentioned in the chapter 2.1, the period between 1973 and 1976 was a time when liberal, radical and leftist ideas influenced the student-led pro-democracy movements in Thailand. These ideas were also felt within the religions in Thailand. Some members of the Buddhist Order, *Sangha*, as well as the CCT were influenced. In 1973 a memorial service was arranged by the CCT to commemorate those who had died in the October 1973 uprising. During the following years, serious internal controversy took place in the CCT. It concerned social, political, and theological issues. Prasith Pongudom sees the social and political issues being more prominent, Samuel I. Kim emphasizes the theological issues as the root cause for controversies. Some in the leadership of the CCT were accused of being Communists. The controversy was dealt with shortly in the Chapter 3.1.3.¹⁰¹

Khrischak na Prathet Thai samai saman khrang thi 13. 1-6. 12. 1974, 49. Payap

⁹⁹Silawech Kanjanamukhda, interview May 23, 1987.

¹⁰⁰On Uppsala and Bangkok Assemblies: See e.g. James A. Scherer, ...that the Gospel may be sincerely preached throughout the world. A Lutheran Perspective on Mission and Evangelism in the 20th Century. LWF Report 11/12 Geneva. 1982, 89-97.

¹⁰¹Prasith Pongudom 1984, 163, 174. Kim 1976, VIII, 72, 73. Dr. Wichien's sermon at the opening of the Bangkok Assembly is printed as an Appendix. Dr. Wichien is mentioned as one of the persons who had read the "delicate portions of this thesis and gave constructive comments".

In 1977 Dr. Kosol wrote a letter to Prime Minister Thanin Kraivixien in his capacity as the General Secretary of the CCT concerning the arrest of the students after the October 1976 suppression of the demonstration. This act did not receive the approval of the members and other leaders of the CCT, and finally Dr. Kosol resigned. The year 1978 meant a new change in the internal power balance in the CCT. The more conservative or evangelical segment returned to power. Mr. Vibul Pattharathammas, a businessman and an elder of the Saphan Luang Church (7th District), was elected the Moderator. However, the change in the trends had started some years earlier.¹⁰²

It seems that the evangelical segment reacted in various ways to the polarization. Dr. Wichien, Rev. Silawej and their associates resigned from the CCT. Most of the people with evangelical emphases obviously remained in the CCT. Some young people reacted by seeking theological training outside the CCT. Studies on the history of the theological institutes could give more information. The theological institutes are shortly introduced in Chapter 4.1.5. When the Bangkok Bible College, later Bangkok Bible College and Seminary, was established, several young people from the CCT in the North, especially from Chiang Rai, enrolled to study there. Many of them did not return to work in the CCT.¹⁰³

According to the information given by the South East Asia Mission of the Church of God for the review published by the Department for Religious Affairs in 1982, the Church of God in Thailand was founded in 1975 when the missionaries contacted Rev. Wichien Watkicharoen. The missionaries had arrived in Thailand in 1973.¹⁰⁴

According to Dr. Wichien, the Church of God (Anderson) sent representatives to Thailand to survey possibilities to open work. They contacted the CCT but the CCT was not willing at that time to accept new mission agencies. After that they contacted the EFT, and Dr. Charan Ratanabutra, the Chairman of the EFT advised them to contact Dr. Wichien who had finished his term as the General Secretary of the CCT. The Church of God agreed to support him, and decided to send missionaries to

¹⁰²Prasith Pongudom 1984, 163, 174-1975. Kim 1976, VIII. Quote: "...in recent years the liberal influence has been gradually fading." The Moderator acts as the Chairman of the General Assembly, Administrative Council and the Executive Committee. *Thammanoon Sapha Khrischak* 1974, 30-40.

¹⁰³It has been said that the BBC was not bound to any organization, it did not "*thue khana nikai*". In the beginning of the 1980s several new mission agencies, including the Lutheran Mission in Thailand were expanding their ministries in Bangkok. The number of students at the theological institutes was expanding rapidly. The institutes needed places to send the students for their field education. The LMT received students from the Bangkok Bible College and the Bangkok Institute of Theology to practice in the new church planting ministries. The BBC students from the North formed a rather close community. When the LMT announced during the years to receive new coworkers, several of these young men from the North applied. They have later formed an important part of the first leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Probably some of the BBC students from the CCT congregations in the North returned to the CCT, but many have been serving in the EFT related organizations.

¹⁰⁴*Raigan karn upatham sasana uen* 2525 (1982), 185-187.

Thailand. On Dr. Wichien's advice, the missionaries started their ministry in Buriram in Northeastern Thailand because there was no active church work in the province. The Christian and Missionary Alliance had had work there but with little success. In addition to church planting a Bible school was opened in Bangkok. The initial membership of the Church of God in Bangkok consisted of the families of Dr. Wichien and Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda. The others were Christians from the Northeast who had moved to work in Bangkok.¹⁰⁵

The Church of God (Anderson) is one of the "restoration movements" started in the United States of America during the nineteenth century. The headquarters are located in Anderson, Indiana. There are several groups using the name Church of God, and for this reason the location of the headquarters is used to distinguish between churches with similar names. It was founded as a splinter from another restoration movement, today called the Churches of God in North America, General Eldership. The Church of God (Anderson) describes its present theological stand as follows: "We like to think of ourselves as conservative, rooted in Wesleyan-Arminian evangelicalism, a part of the Anabaptist free-church tradition, a part of the Holiness Movement that came to mid-America in the past century." The stand on perfect holiness has been softened. The Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues as the sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit is rejected. As a remainder from the history of the movement, the autonomy of local congregations is honored.¹⁰⁶

According to the Thailand Christian Directory of 1999, the Church of God had 18 congregations, two of them in Bangkok. According to the Directory, ten of the congregations are in the Northeast, mostly in Buriram, but in Roi-et and Amnat Charoen as well. The rest are in the North, in Chainat, Maehongson, Chiang Mai and Sukhothai. Some of them have been registered directly in the EFT as well. According to Rev. Silawej, the Bangkok churches have 60 members together. The combined membership is 600. Before becoming a full member, a person must attend the church for at least 3 years. Rev. Silawej is the only ordained minister, but there are two candidates for ordination.¹⁰⁷

The Church of God in Thailand does not have its own statement of faith, but it uses

¹⁰⁵Interview with Wichien Watkicharoen July 7, 1999. *Raigan karn upatham sasana uen*, 2525 (1982) 185-186. Questionnaire May 1987.

¹⁰⁶The Church of God in Thailand. Mimeograph. 1987, 1. Silawej Kanjanamukhda, interview May 23, 1987. Seppo A Teinonen. Nykyajan lahkot. Avain 8. Kirjayhtymä, Helsinki 1965, 35-39. Oral and Laura Withrow, Meet us at the Cross. Introduction to the Church of God. Published by the Executive Council, the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana. Later than 1983, 15-24. Gaines 1966, 83-85.

¹⁰⁷Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 180. Interview with Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda June 30, 1999. In 1973, the Church of God in Amnat Charoen and Church of God in Jumjong, Roi-et became registered as EFT members. See EFT Raigan prajampee 1992, 22. According to Rev. Silawej, the Church of God in Sukhothai is registered directly by the EFT, too. Three years is the longest time needed for candidacy for full membership in the Protestant community Thailand. Here full membership obviously refers to baptism.

the statements of the EFT and the Church of God (Anderson). Rev Silawej has studied at the Anderson School of Theology.¹⁰⁸

A summary of the independent churches begun as protest against the CCT is given in Table 12.

Table 12. Independent churches begun as protest against the CCT.

Name	Est.	EFT	Members 1987	Members 1999
Bangkok Church (3)	1948	1970	300	300 ¹
--Hua Hin Church		1970		
--Santisuk nai Phra Jesu Church	1999			20 ³
Chiang Mai Thai Church (14)	1950	1975	NA	10
--Hua Rin Church (15)		1975	NA	120
Samchuk Church (5) incl. d. churches	1954	1972	58 ⁴	100 ¹
--Thwaweepon Church (60)		1987	NA	50 ²
Church of God (16) Combined	1975	1975	35 ⁴	600
Total				1200

Sources: EFT *Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires 1986, 1987, 1999.

¹Author's estimate. ²Author's estimate based on information from Silawej Kanjanamukhda 1999. ³Author's estimate based on information from Wichien Watkicharoen 1999. ⁴Only the mother church. Number in brackets refers to the list by EFT Office in 1999.

The Bangkok Church and the Church of God have many similarities. The leaders of both churches were well established in the CCT, and the resignation was in both cases presented as protest against liberal or radical teachings and practices. Doctrinally both represent evangelical eclecticism. Neither of them has produced its own statement of faith, but both refer to the statement of the EFT.

¹⁰⁸Questionnaire May 1987.

3.3. EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES

The term Evangelical Free Church¹⁰⁹ is used here for the churches that maintain the principle of the autonomy of a local church. Forming of this category is thus theologically motivated. These churches have been established on the initiative of national Christians, sometimes as splinters from existing local churches. The formation of the new church has not been a premeditated strategy of expansion of the existing body, but caused by a desire to establish a new independent church. Some of the churches have established daughter churches, but it is understood that the daughter churches will become independent bodies. Doctrinal questions have been of secondary interest. Many of the churches have developed connections to churches and mission agencies abroad or have independent missionaries co-operating with them. The churches have maintained their independent status, but obviously the outside connections have influenced their theology and practice.¹¹⁰

In addition to the studies in Thai church history, the history of the Evangelical Free Churches is related to the history of the cross-cultural mission of the Asian churches. Asian missionaries have been involved with many of the churches now considered independent.

Individual Evangelical Free Churches have been born in critical interaction sometimes with several churches and mission agencies. For this reason it is difficult to make classifications based on their backgrounds. One distinction could be the division into Pentecostal or Charismatic churches and others, but even this classification is problematic. Practices like praying for the sick and exorcisms are practiced widely. Robert Nishimoto lists the following as independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches: Ruam Nimit Church, Bangkok Fellowship Church (Samakkheetham Krunthep), Tha Ruea Klontoe Church, Fa Muang Thai Church, Ban Khristian Nawanakhorn Church, Holy of Holy Church (Khrischak Aphisuthtisathan), Sangsan Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church (Phlapphla), Krungthai Church and Bangkok Church. His list includes the following provincial churches: Trad Church, Phrakittikhun Kan Tang Church, Chiang Mai Phantakit Church.¹¹¹

In Nishimoto's list the status of some churches is uncertain. The situation fluctuates so that in different situations some churches may identify themselves differently. Interviewers coming from different traditions may receive different answers.

¹⁰⁹The term Free Church is an ambiguous term. According to Durnbaugh it has been given five different definitions. See: Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believer's Church. The History and Character of Radical Protestantism. Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. 1985, 4 - 33.

¹¹⁰The reasons for secession vary from personal dissatisfaction to a desire to establish a church for a particular ethnic or social group, and to doctrinal disagreements. The reasons are seldom expressed publicly, for according to the common Thai behavior code, one should avoid publicly expressing criticism.

¹¹¹Nishimoto 1996, 317-313, 327-339.

Apparently there are churches which do not see themselves comfortably fitting into Pentecostal category as defined by the Western traditional Pentecostals. The Tabernacle Baptist (Phlapphla) Church has later joined the Thailand Baptist Association. In 1987 the Fa Muang Thai Church informed that it has received influences from different directions; it did not identify itself as a Pentecostal church. The same is true for the Krungthai Church and Sangsan Church. The Bangkok Church was in the late 1950s a center of the Pentecostal ministry in Thailand, but later has kept a definite distance to the Pentecostal movement. In addition, Nishimoto omits churches which definitely are Charismatic, like Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church, but includes the United Pentecostal Church, which has been in isolation from the other Protestants since the 1960s. Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church have consciously taken distance from the missionary-established Pentecostal groups.

The problem of fluid borders as seen in Nishimoto's presentation can be partly explained by his methods. Most of his material was collected by interviews. Sections about the independent churches and the United Pentecostal Church are edited interviews with a minimum of analysis. Some of the churches Nishimoto contacted requested not to be included. Information on refusals is not given. It is thus not possible to conclude if Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church were excluded because they excluded themselves, or because the author decided to exclude them. The borders of the Pentecostal movement are thus not clear. Nishimoto himself has made a definition of the borders when selecting the groups he contacted. He decided to include the United Pentecostal Church though this group has been almost totally isolated not only from the Pentecostal movement, but the whole Protestant community as well. It seems that church politics, not theology, has become the decisive factor in defining the borders of the Pentecostal movement in Thailand.¹¹²

The Evangelical Free Churches are further divided into subgroups according to their locations. This is done in order to demonstrate that the emergence of independent churches in Thailand is a urban phenomenon. The ethnic background is taken into consideration when possible.

3.3.1. Urban churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area

Most of the churches listed here were included in the 1987 list of independent churches provided by the EFT. The additions to that list in 1999 can be divided into two groups: churches that have joined the EFT in the 1990s; and the Grace Baptist Church and the Bangkok Fellowship Church, which in 1987 were considered semi-

¹¹²Nishimoto 1996, XIII. Nishimoto obviously follows a pattern established by the Pentecostal leaders in America. Faupel states that the advocates of the "New Issue" or "Oneness" rejecting the Trinitarian doctrine, were defined as heretics. They were isolated, and have not been able to gain recognition as a legitimate branch of Christianity. They have represented about 20 percent of the Pentecostal constituency. However, their membership is included when Trinitarian Pentecostal leaders cite statistics to show the overall strength and growth of the movement. Faupel 1996, 300, 303, 304.

independent churches. These churches had been established by mission organizations, but they were in process of becoming autonomous bodies. By 1999, the category of semi-independent churches seems to have disappeared. Local churches are either clearly independent or belong to a denomination. In addition, some churches that I categorized as of Evangelical Free Churches in 1993, are now developing as new denominations, for example the Muang Thai Churches and the Vision Gospel Churches (Khrischak Ruam Nimit).¹¹³

Thonburi Baptist Church (Khrischak Thonburi) (1)

The Thonburi Baptist Church was founded in 1966. It joined the EFT in 1970 among the first local churches. The membership was 115 in 1987. The church was bilingual; both Thai and Taechiou Chinese were used. It had two daughter churches in the Srisaket Province.¹¹⁴ Although the Thonburi Baptist Church was bilingual, it had the cultural image of a Chinese church. Almost all names on the 1978 list of the deacons were Chinese. The decoration of the church building was influenced by Chinese culture. The pastor, Dr. Chu Prateepsuksan (Lim Yok Chair) was born in China and was educated in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The church was co-operating with Chinese (Baptist) churches in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.¹¹⁵

The constitution of the Thonburi Baptist Church was adopted in 1978. The doctrinal questions were not arranged in the form of a statement of faith, but were discussed in connection with organization, membership, and sacraments. The constitution also presented a short history of the church. According to Dr. Chu, the Thonburi Baptist Church saw itself as an independent Baptist church. He has written critically on speaking in tongues.¹¹⁶

In 1999 the Thonburi Baptist Church did not give any information. Most likely the ministry of the church has continued with minor changes since 1987.

Grace Baptist Church (Khrischak Phra Karunathikun) (2)

The EFT Office did not list the Grace Baptist Church as an independent church in 1987. It was founded by the missionaries of the Philippine Association of Baptists for

¹¹³See: Mäkelä 1993, 50.

¹¹⁴*Rabiab karn khobangkhab lae prawat yo khong Khrischak Thonburi.* (Constitution and History of the Thonburi Baptist Church). 1978, 10-15. (in Thai and Chinese). EFT Office May 1987. Questionnaire 1987. This church should not be confused with the *Sala Khristian Thonburi*, belonging to the Thailand Baptist Association, occasionally also called the Thonburi Baptist Church in English.

¹¹⁵*Rabiab ...Khrischak Thonburi* 1978, 38-39. Questionnaire May 1987. Dr Lim Yok Chair, interview May 23, 1987. Author's observations.

¹¹⁶*Rabiab ... Khrischak Thonburi.* Lim Yok Chair, interview May 23, 1987. About the doctrine of the Baptist Churches see f. ex. Meet Southern Baptists. Southern Baptist Convention. 1983. This leaflet is a presentation of the Doctrine and activities of the Southern Baptist Convention.

World Evangelization in 1967. This mission organization had visas for eleven missionary units in 1999. The Grace Baptist Church was among the first local churches registered by the EFT in 1970. The pastor, Kiattisak Siriphanadon has studied in Philippines. The Church informed that it had 60 members in the end of 1998.¹¹⁷

The Nonthaburi Baptist Church (8)

The Nonthaburi Baptist Church joined the EFT in October 1973. The attendance in the worship services was approximately 30 persons in 1986. That year 3 persons were baptized. The church was established by the Philippine Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, but it has broken away from that mission. In 1987, it had some contacts with the Thailand Baptist Association. The Nonthaburi Baptist Church did not answer the 1999 questionnaire.¹¹⁸

Bangkok Fellowship Church (Khrischak Samakheetham Krungthep) (10)

The Bangkok Fellowship Church was not listed as an independent church in 1987. It was known that it did not belong to any organized Pentecostal groups. The church was established by missionaries, and missionaries have been involved in its ministry at least until the late 1980s, and it has received financial support from abroad. In 1999 the EFT listed the Bangkok Fellowship Church as an independent church. This means that it has not joined any of the several Pentecostal groups, but has maintained its autonomous status.

The Bangkok Fellowship Church was established in 1969 by Robert Nishimoto, an American Pentecostal missionary. Rev. Dr. Nishimoto served for a long time in Thailand, since the early 1960s until 1999. He used the visa of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission, and in the beginning was co-operating with them. Later his relationship with the FFFM has been distant. The FFFM established its Bible school in 1960, but Nishimoto has distanced himself from it. Instead, he served as the Director of the Thailand Pentecostal Bible College for a long time.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Questionnaire 1999. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 21. Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 40,278.

¹¹⁸EFT Office, May 1987. EFT survey on church planting 1986. Discussions with Mark Caldwell and Hubert Fox, Thailand Baptist Mission, May 25, 1987.

¹¹⁹Nishimoto 1996, 331-333. Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 274. 25th Anniversary. Thailand Pentecostal Bible College. 1994. 35-37. In Thai and in English. Nishimoto was invited as the Director of the College in 1986. The college was established in 1969. Täyden evankeliumin raamattukoulu. 1985. 5-12. (25 year Anniversary publication of the Full Gospel Training Center in Thai and Finnish). Names of two lady missionaries, Coralie Holmes and Beverly Reed are mentioned (Transliteration from Thai). Ms. Holmes was a missionary of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. When the Bangkok Fellowship Church was commenced in 1969, the FFFM had one local church in Bangkok. In addition the Bangkok Church was in the late 1950s and early 1960s counted as a Pentecostal church.

The Bangkok Fellowship Church was established according to the principle of the autonomy of the local church, and slowly took distance from the work of the FFFM. The Bangkok Fellowship Church did not join the other Pentecostals, the Assemblies of God from Canada and the USA, when they began their work in Bangkok. Nishimoto states that he was influenced by the example of the Korean Pentecostal preacher Yonggi Cho in opening the new church. By the end of the 1970s national leadership was emerging. Two men were ordained by the church in 1976. One of them, Rev. Somkiat Kittiphong is the pastor of the church.¹²⁰

In 1996 the church had 315 members. It has gone through divisions. For example, in 1983, 30 of the 70 members left the church. Though not officially recorded, it seems obvious that these individuals joined the new quickly growing Pentecostal churches, which were accused of “sheep stealing”. The church has established two daughter churches in Kabinburi in Prachinburi Province and in Barn Nongkaitia in Kanchanaburi. The church was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1974.¹²¹

Krung Thai Church (The Church of the Thai Capital) (18)

This church is usually known by its Thai name as the Krung Thai Church. The English name is a translation from Thai. There is different information about the history of the Krung Thai Church. There is some confusion regarding the date of its establishment, possibly due the fact that the church has moved several times, and has used different names. According to information given by Nishimoto, the church was established in 1966. The founder was Ms. Ruth Chen, a missionary from the Philadelphia Church in Hong Kong, also called the New Testament Church. The Krung Thai Church joined the EFT in 1977. The membership was about 80 in 1987. The membership of the Krung Thai Church comprises mostly of Sino-Thai or Chinese ethnic groups. The church has connections to Chinese churches called the Philadelphia Churches. In addition to Thailand, the Philadelphia Churches are found in USA, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The pastor, Mr. Chui In Ting, who started to work in May 1987, is a missionary from Taiwan. Thai, Mandarin and Taechiew Chinese were used in 1987.¹²²

The Krung Thai Church is in a process of becoming more Thai. In 1996, it was

¹²⁰Nishimoto 1996, 331-332. *Khrobrop 10 pee Khrichak Samakkheetham Krungthep*. 1979. 8, 12-17. (Anniversary publication in Thai).

¹²¹Nishimoto 1996, 332-333. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992,22.

¹²²Questionnaire 1987. Sunee Jirawitjatkun, secretary of the Krung Thai Church, interview May 20,1987. EFT Office, May 1987. EFT survey on church planting 1986. Nishimoto 1996, 330. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 23. The (EFT) 1986 survey gave information that the church was established 8 years earlier. According to 1987 questionnaire the church was established in 1973 as splinter from the Bangkok Church. Nishimoto’s information, received from Mr. Chui, must be held more reliable. In 1996 Mr Chui was close to retirement, he was already 69 years old. His wife is a daughter of Wong Doe Ing, pastor of the Saphan Luang Church, who was one of the interpreters in Dr. Sung’s campaigns.

announced that the Chinese worship has been closed. However, in the 1999 questionnaire it was still informed that Thai and Chinese are used. This probably means that there still are some Chinese activities going on. The membership was 120 and there were 20 persons baptized the previous year. There were two daughter churches, one in Chiang Mai and one in Pattani. Chiang Mai Church (28) has been accepted as a member of the EFT.¹²³

In the beginning, the Krungthai Church had an understanding that it was the only real church. It applied for a membership in the EFT, but was not accepted. This led to self-examination in the church, and finally it was concluded that the church could not claim to be the only correct one. In the 1990s the connection to the Pentecostal Romyen Church of the Thailand Assemblies of God (*Khristian Samphan*) appeared to be close. However, the distinctly Pentecostal emphases are not mentioned in the Statement of Faith of the Krung Thai Church.¹²⁴

Salvation Church (Khrischak Khwamroot) (44)

The Salvation Church was established in March 1986. The plan originated from six years earlier. The founding group included Hainan Chinese speaking Christians. The pastor, Rev. Charnchai Isaramala, was an elder in a Chinese Pentecostal church before leaving for theological studies at the Hong Kong Bible Seminary. After his return, the church was organized. In 1987, it was accepted as a member of the EFT. The membership was 20 in 1987, 18 of whom were former members of some other church. The church had its own statement of faith. Pentecostal influence could be seen in the teaching about the Holy Spirit, but baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues was not mentioned.¹²⁵

The Salvation Church did not return the questionnaire in 1999, but in a phone call I was informed that the church had around 20 members and had established 12 daughter churches with a combined membership close to 2000.¹²⁶

Sangsan Church (48)

The Sangsan Church is comprised of members of the Prachakhom Church of the

¹²³Questionnaire 1999. Nishimoto 1996, 330. Nishimoto gives the membership as 140.

¹²⁴Questionnaire 1999. Nishimoto 1996, 330. Rev. Virachai Kowae, the pastor of the Rom Yen Church was the guarantor when the Krung Thai Church applied to membership in the EFT. The Krung Thai Church is using the Romyen teaching material.

¹²⁵ *Prawat khong Khrischak Khwamrot*. (History of the Salvation Church). Mimeograph 1986. EFT, certificate on membership May 11, 1988. Hong Kong Bible Seminary, Certificate May 27, 1985. *Thammanoon khong Khrischak Khwamrot*. Sine Anno. (Constitution of the Salvation Church).

¹²⁶ This information was later confirmed by another phone call. Jukka Helle to Jaakko Mäkelä. June 8, 2000.

Twelfth District of the CCT (Chinese Baptist) who around 1985 left their church in order to establish a new church. It is presented here because it seems to have been an isolated case, not connected to the controversies in the CCT presented in the previous chapter. The leader of the group was Chanwut Woraphawong, whose actions were based on a dream. This is one of the occasions when guidance of God is reportedly received in a dream. Referring to dreams in connection to important decisions is quite common in the Thai Protestant community in general. It is not restricted to groups called Pentecostal or Charismatic. Pentecostal preachers were invited to the Prachakhom Church, but this led to a division. According to information given by Nishimoto, Mr. Chanwut was the pastor until 1996, when Mr. Narong Thanachanthaphon, a Bangkok Bible College and Seminary graduate, became the pastor. The church has grown rather steadily; in 1999 the church reported to have 130 members, of which about 20 have come by transfer. Roughly 60 per cent of the members are said to have experienced the Pentecostal Baptism in the Spirit.¹²⁷

Fa Muang Thai Church (50)

In 1987, the Fa Muang Thai Church was in the process of becoming formally organized and was influenced by the Baptists and the Pentecostals. It was established in 1983 and had 25 members in 1986. The founding group consisted of four persons. It was accepted as a member of EFT in 1988.¹²⁸

The Fa Muang Thai Church did not return the questionnaire in 1999. Nishimoto listed it as a Pentecostal independent church. In 1996 the church had 60 members, and had established a daughter church in Bangsaen in Chonburi province. Kriangsak Wanitwit has been the pastor.¹²⁹

Santisuk Church (55)

Santisuk Church has been established by Rev. Dr. Phaitoon Hatthamas. Around 1990 he was on further studies abroad. He had been an elder in the Muang Thai Church (Chapter 3.4.1) for several years and was planning to return to Muang Thai Church after completing the studies. He planned to become the assistant pastor and a teacher

¹²⁷Discussions with Rev. Thaweep Oiwan and Miss Rewadee Sae Liu, July 27, 1989. Nishimoto 1996, 336. Questionnaire 1999. In the late 1980s Rev. Manoj Saengmook, a lecturer at the Bangkok Bible College and since 1999 its director, was involved in the Sangsan Church. Rev. Manoj was reportedly asked to be the pastor. However, he could also have been acting as an advisor. In Nishimoto's presentation his name is not mentioned. Here is an example of the varying level of accuracy of information given. Some information can be withdrawn by purpose, some by mistake. In 1996 the membership was reported to have been 120.

¹²⁸ Kriangsak Wanitwit, interview May 14, 1987. Questionnaire 1987. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 30

¹²⁹ Nishimoto 1996, 334-335. In a phone call I was informed that the church had about 30 members.

at Muang Thai Theological Seminary. These plans were not materialized. Dr. Phaitoon has established a new independent church called Santisuk Church which in 1999 formed a group three local churches. Combined membership could be 200.¹³⁰

Bangkok Sion Church (59), Chin Samphan Church (61), Ban Suanson Church (68) and Salom nai Krungthep Church (70)

There are several churches listed by the EFT as independent churches, which did not return the 1999 questionnaire. Most likely these churches have 30-50 members each. According to the new regulations for applying for membership used since September 1997, a church applying for membership in the EFT as an independent church has to have at least 50 adult members. Most of the churches here have been accepted as members of the EFT before 1997 when the requirements concerning membership were defined. Bangkok Sion Church (59) was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1991. The 1999 questionnaire was returned by the post, the church was unknown at the given address. Chin Samphan Church (61), a Chinese church, was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1992. Ban Suanson Church (68) and Salom nai Krungthep Church (70) were accepted as members of the EFT in 1993 or later. Ban Suanson Church has possibly been founded by Korean missionaries.¹³¹

The Church of Jesus Christ (Khrischak Ong Phra Jesu Khrist Chao) (73)

The Church of Jesus Christ (Ong Phra Jesu Khrist Chao Church) is a splinter from the Jai Samarn Church of the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand. It was established after the crisis at Jai Samarn Church in the late 1980s. It was not included Nishimoto's list of independent Pentecostal churches. Prophesying is an important part in the ministry of the church. There are several prophets, mostly women in the church. When important decisions are to be made, the pastor may ask the prophets to reveal the will of God. There are American visitors, possibly missionaries, to the church. My estimation is that there are up to 100 members.¹³²

Santiphap Church, Bangkok (74)

¹³⁰ *Sathaban Bundit Khristsasansart Muang Thai*. Sine Anno, around 1990. (Muang Thai Theological Seminary. Introduction booklet). *Thailand Christian Directory 1999*. Christian Guide. Bangkok, 194.

¹³¹(EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 30-31. I have used this EFT Annual Report in verifying the membership in the EFT. Since the list given by the EFT Office is apparently made in order of entering into membership in EFT, it is safe to assume that churches not found in the membership list of 1992 have entered the EFT between 1993 and 1997. EFT Membership Regulations and Membership Application Form. September 15, 1997 (In Thai).

¹³²Information from a former member of the church. My informant was a member of the church for a couple of years in the middle of the 1990s. The church had a vision to build a large church in a major intersection. (Ladphrao and Rachadaphisek). A distinction is made between *phu phoei phra wajana* and *phu phayakorn*. Both can be translated as prophet. The former is a coined word used in the Bible. Some times the verb *phayakorn* is used in the Bible as well. The latter is a common word used in connection to prediction and foretelling.

The EFT Office listed the Santiphap Church as an independent church in 1999. Actually, there is a group called Santiphap Presbyterian Churches, with three churches in Thailand and one in Singapore. The other Santiphap Churches in Thailand are located in Yasothon and Buriram in the Northeast. In a phone call I received information that the Santiphap Church had about 40 members in 1999. The whole Santiphap community probably consists of 150 members. Korean missionaries are working with the Santiphap Churches.¹³³

Holy of Holy Church (Khrischak Aphisuthisathan) (75)

The Holy of Holy Church was opened in 1993 in Minburi, in the northeastern outskirts of Bangkok. Information concerning the church is received mainly from Nishimoto. In July 1999 I was in contact by phone with the church. The leader is Mr. Nakhon Wetsaphaphon, a Christian businessman. He received Christ in 1988, and in the beginning joined the Hope of Bangkok Church for some months, and after that he joined the Jai Samarn Church of the Full Gospel Assemblies. From 1991 to 1993 he was a member of the Ruam Nimit Church, led by Rev. Nirut Chankong (See Chapter 3.4.). It was emphasized that the departure from the Ruam Nimit Church was amicable. By 1995 the membership of the Holy of Holy Church had grown to 300, and 90 percent of the members are said to be new Christians.¹³⁴

Immanuel Don Muang Church

This church was begun in 1998 by a group of 15 Christians in the northern part of Bangkok. In 1999 the membership was informed to be 80. It has not yet applied for membership in the EFT.¹³⁵

¹³³ Christian Directory 1999, 202.

¹³⁴ Nishimoto 1996, 338. *Thamniab.* 1994, 58-60.

¹³⁵ Questionnaire 1999.

Table 13 summarizes the Evangelical Free Churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area in 1999.

Table 13. Evangelical Free Churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area in 1999.

Name	Est.	EFT	Members 1987	Members 1999
Thonburi Baptist Church (1)	1966	1970	115	120 ¹
Grace Baptist Church (2)	1967	1970		60
Nonthaburi Baptist Church (8)		1973	30	50 ¹
Bangkok Fellowship Church (10)	1969	1974		350 ³
Krung Thai Church (18)	1966	1977	80	120
Salvation Church, (44) combined	1986	1987	20	2000
Sangsan Church (48)	1985	1987	30	130
Fa Muang Thai Church (50)	1983	1988	25	60 ³
Santisuk Church (55) combined		1990		200 ¹
Bangkok Sion Church (59)		1991		30 ¹
Chin Samphan Church (61)		1992		30 ¹
Ban Suanson Church (68)		c. 1993		30 ¹
Salom nai Krungthep Church (70)		c. 1993		30 ¹
Ong Phra Jesu Khrist Chao C. (73)	c. 1990	c. 1995		100 ¹
Santiphap Churches (74), Comb.		c. 1995		150 ¹
Holy of Holy Church (75)	1993	c. 1997		350 ³
Immanuel Don Muang Church	1998	--		80
Total				3890

Sources: EFT *Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires 1986, 1987, 1999. Nishimoto 1996. ¹Author's estimate. ²Author's estimate based on information from Silawej Kanjanamukhda 1999. ³Author's estimation based on information from Nishimoto 1996.

Variations in the development of the independent churches

In addition to the churches listed by the EFT Office, there are independent churches that have been disbanded. Small independent groups have been formed since the Second World War and especially since 1970. Successful attempts to establish new independent churches have been described above. Little information is available on the unsuccessful attempts. Some of the groups may have functioned for a couple of years; the maximum membership may have been around twenty for each group. Some became accepted as members of the EFT. Obtaining accurate information about the independent churches is difficult. The information here concerns only the Bangkok Metropolitan area, obtaining information from other provinces would be practically impossible.

The Bethania Church was closed when the leader, Chalermasuk Seehaphong, moved to America and the church was not able to find a new leader. He was originally a Baptist, but adopted the Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The church was established as an independent church in 1975. Most of the members were of Chinese ethnic background. When the church, located in Yannawa district, was closed in 1985,

there were about 80 members. The members joined other churches. Another church that has been closed is the Charan Chanitwong Church in Thonburi, which was functioning for a couple of years. It was a Chinese church.¹³⁶

Two churches were accepted as members of the EFT before they were closed. The Santisuk nai Phra Khrist Church (Happiness in Christ) was accepted as a member of EFT in July 1979. In 1985, it was impossible to contact the church anymore. According to Dr. Charan, this church was formed by a group of Hainan Chinese Christians who left the Bangkok Church in order to establish their own church around 1965. The church was meeting at various places. Finally, Mr. Prida, owner of Silom Plaza shopping center and a member of the church, invited the church to worship there. Mr. Prida died, and the old buildings were demolished. In this situation, some of the older members returned to the Bangkok Church, some joined the Christ to Thailand Mission that met at the YMCA.¹³⁷

As recorded in the chapter 3.2.1, the children of the former members of the Santisuk nai Phra Jesu Khrist have made an attempt to open a new independent church using the old name. In 1987, a group called the Siam Church was meeting in the F.C.M. Bookstore. These premises have been also earlier used as the first meeting place of an emerging church. In 1999, no information was available for this group.

The Ratburana Church was accepted as a member of the EFT in November 1975. It was officially closed in 1985, but ceased to function some years earlier. It was listed also by the Thailand Baptist Association under the name Ratburana Church or Ratburana Chapel. The church was established by two women who had been studying at the Bible School run by the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Khon Kaen. The members of the church were visiting a school for the handicapped in Phra Prapadaeng, in the outskirts of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, and several students at the institute became Christians and joined the Ratburana Church. After some years the church was disbanded. The members joined other churches or moved away from Bangkok. There

¹³⁶Charan Ratanabutra and Silavej Kanjanamukhda, interview May 10, 1987. Isako Jia, interview April 3, 1993. Mr. Isako was a member of the Bethania Church.

When entire local churches have been switching denomination or mother church, the church “taking over” has usually been criticized. The “take over” has not necessarily always been the initiative of the receiving church. I have personal memories, which in retrospect must have been connected to Charan Sanitwong Church. The Norwegian Missionary Society sent its first missionaries, former missionaries to Hong Kong to Thailand in 1976. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission sent its first missionaries in late 1978. I arrived with my family in August 1979. The two mission agencies were in the process of establishing a joint organization, the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. In July 1979, Mrs. Sarp Kheawkhamsaeng approached the missionaries of the FELM to discuss the future of a church on Charan Sanitwong Road. Mrs. Sarp was understood to be the owner of the property, 1200 square meters of land with buildings. The attendance to worship services was 20-40. Mrs. Sarp made an offer to the FELM either to buy or to rent the property in order to continue the ministry of the church. Discussions continued for several months. Finally, it was concluded that the Lutherans were not able to take responsibility of the church at that time. The offer is recorded in the Minutes of the FELM Missionary Meeting September 29-30.1979 in Bangkok.

¹³⁷(EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 45. Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987.

were two main reasons for closing the church. First, the church did not have a permanent pastor. Secondly, the church borrowed money from the Baptist Foundation in order to buy land for the church, but was not able to return the loan because there were too few members. The building was sold to the Finnish Free Foreign Mission. The teaching of the church was mostly the same as that of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.¹³⁸

In 1999, the EFT Office listed as independent churches some local churches that were not included into the list in 1987. In 1987 the Grace Baptist Church and the Bangkok Fellowship Church were seen as semi-independent churches. The difference apparently was in the process of establishing. The semi-independent churches were established by mission agencies or individual missionaries. Later, the missionaries have not been able to support the churches or have purposefully withdrawn from the church without affiliating it with other organized bodies. By 1999 it has become clearer which churches are not going to join the existing national organizations. This is probably in connection to the trend where the EFT is seen as a co-operative body of various Churches, not an organized Church itself. Within the major Pentecostal groups there are still churches with only weak connections to the national organization.¹³⁹

Some Chinese independent churches have members among the ethnic Chinese. The Little Flock or the Assembly Hall Church has two worship groups in Bangkok. The True Jesus Church is mentioned to have at least two worship groups in Bangkok.¹⁴⁰

There are small house churches under the name the Church of Christ and the United Pentecostal Church. These are results of proselytizing activities of the Church of Christ (non-instrumental) and the United Pentecostal Church. There are small groups, which may develop to become independent churches. As an example can be mentioned Rom Phrahat Church in Pakred, in the outskirts of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.¹⁴¹

There are some churches that have begun as independent churches, but have later joined the established national Churches. Saengkhom Church, belonging to the Twelfth District of the CCT, is said to have begun as an independent church. The House of Christ Church was established by Rev. Rung Kothirakul, a teacher at the Bangkok

¹³⁸(EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 47. Anant Likhitwitayanoont to Jaakko Mäkelä 24.6.1991, (in Thai) Rev. Anant, who as a student was a member of the Ratburana Church, is a minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Summary of Bangkok Baptist Churches. Thailand Baptist Mission. August, 1985, 2. Mimeograph.

¹³⁹The Prachasan Church and the Pakred Church of the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand are often considered to be semi-independent churches.

¹⁴⁰Deng Chaoming 1994

¹⁴¹Information on the Rom Phrahat Church was received from Dr. Wichien Watkicharoen. This worship group consists of some Christians of various backgrounds living in Pakred area.

Institute of Theology of the Seventh District of the CCT. In a study tour to Korea in 1980, he got the vision of how to establish a church. The church was established as an independent church in January 1982. Since 1986, the church has been listed under the Sixth District of the CCT, not in the Seventh District from where Rev. Rung originally left. The church is bilingual; Thai and Taechiou Chinese are used. Nishimoto lists the Tharua Klongtoey Church (Klongtoey Harbor Church) as an independent Pentecostal church. The church was established by some members of the Jai Samarn Church living in the Klontoy slum area. The Tharua Klongtoey Church may have functioned some time as an independent church, but in 1999 it was listed as a member of the Thailand Assemblies of God (Khristian Samphan nai Pratheet Thai)¹⁴²

3.3.2. Independent churches in Chiang Mai

In addition to the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, independent churches are found especially in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai is the second largest city in the country and the center of the Northern Region (*Phak Nua*) of the country. Traditionally it has been the center of Protestantism. Actually, 15 of the total of 25 independent churches registered in the northern provinces are located in Chiang Mai province (See Tables 12, 14 and 15). The other independent churches (excluding the ones in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area) are scattered throughout the country so that there are more independent churches in the North than in the other regions combined.

There are eight independent churches in the Amphoe Muang, (the urban area) itself, including the Chiang Mai Thai Church, (14). There are seven independent churches in other amphoes, including Hua Rin Thai Church (15). In addition, there are daughter churches of the Bangkok independent churches in Chiang Mai. At least Romklao Church, the Hope of Bangkok Church, Muang Thai Church, and Church of God have daughter churches in Chiang Mai.

According to information derived from Tables 12 and 14, the independent churches in Chiang Mai registered by the EFT had 1000 members in 1998. Together with the daughter churches of the Bangkok-based independent churches the total membership in the independent churches in Chiang Mai was 1,200 - 1,300 persons in 1998.

Of the independent churches registered by the EFT Office, only Chiang Mai Church (28), Charophon Church (30), and Phatai Church (41) returned the questionnaire in 1999. Nishimoto gives information on the Chiang Mai Phantakit Church. Rev. Silawej Kanjanamukhda gave information on the provincial independent churches in June 1999. It has been reported that Korean missionaries are working with the Siloah

¹⁴²*Khrischak Barn Phra Khris*. Sine Anno. (Introduction leaflet of the House of Christ Church.) House of Christ Church 1982-1985. 1-5. (Anniversary Publication). The church was established with a 2-2-2 - policy: within 2 years 200 members and 2,000,000 baht for land and church building Update Christian Directory 1986-1987, 114; 1999, 37, 203. Nishimoto 1996, 337. The Tharua Klongtoey Church was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1988. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 30.

Presbyterian Church (59), and with the Thalitha Koomi Mae Hong Son Church (64), possibly a Hmong church. No information is available on the present status of the Group of Chinese speaking Christians (21), Kaenoi Church (23), and Bianguang Church (23). These three churches have possibly been closed or they have joined other organizations.

Chiang Mai Church (28)

Chiang Mai Church is a daughter church of the Krung Thai Church in Bangkok. It was registered by the EFT as an independent church in 1979. It seems to have severed its connections to the mother church. Because of this, it is presented here, not in connection to the Krung Thai Church. In 1999 it informed to have 12 members.¹⁴³

Charoenphon Church (30)

The Charoenphon Church was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1980. It was started by Sripin Akhrasawok after he attended the Riddeed meetings organized by the Pentecostals in Bangkok. The membership figures are not given in the questionnaire. The church has opened five daughter churches in Chiang Mai province. The church is supported by Pentecostals in Hong Kong.¹⁴⁴

Phatai church (41)

Phatai Church is a independent Lahu Baptist church, co-operating with the Chiang Mai Baptist Church, (69) another independent church in Chiang Mai. Phatai Church announced that it does not receive outside support. Membership was 250 in the end of 1998. The church was established in 1975 and it was accepted as member of the EFT in 1985.¹⁴⁵

Phantakit Chiang Mai Church (63)

Phantakit Chiang Mai Church was established in 1991 by Kriangsak and Sirinuch Watthanasrikul, medical doctors living in Chiang Mai. Dr. Kriangsak comes from a Christian family, and as a young man he had contacts with the missionaries of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. He was serving as a deacon (*makkhanayok*) in a Chinese Presbyterian church, and was in 1986-1991 an assistant pastor in a daughter church of the Hope of Bangkok Church in Chiang Mai. In practice, he was the leader of the new Hope Church. In other groups he would have been called the pastor. In 1991 he resigned and opened a new independent church called Phantakit Chiang Mai

¹⁴³Questionnaire 1999. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 24. Nishimoto gives the membership as 30. Nishimoto 1996, 330.

¹⁴⁴Questionnaire 1999. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992,25. Transliteration of the name of the leader is uncertain.

¹⁴⁵Questionnaire 1999. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992,28.

Church. In 1995 there were 80-100 members, of which 90 percent had received the baptism in the Spirit.¹⁴⁶

Table 14 summarizes the Evangelical Free Churches in Chiang Mai province in 1999. The information is rather inaccurate, some of the churches listed by the EFT may have been closed or joined other groups.

Table 14. Evangelical Free Churches in Chiang Mai in 1999.

Name	Est.	EFT	Members 1999
Group of Chinese speak. Christians (21) C		1978	--
Kaenoi Church (22)		1978	--
Biangluang Church (23)		1978	--
Arunothai Church (24)		1978	50 ²
Chiang Mai Church (28) C		1979	20 ¹
Charoenphon Church (30) C		1980	200 ¹
Phatai Church (41)	1975	1985	250
Siloah Presbyterian Church (58) C		1991	50 ²
Ruamjai Church (62)		1992	60 ²
Phantakit Chiang Mai Church (63) C	1991	1992	100
Chiang Mai Baptist Church (69) C		c. 1993	50 ²
Pha Daeng Church (71)		c. 1994	40 ²
Phra Kittikhun nai Ong Phra Jesu Khrist Chao Church (72) C		c. 1994	50 ²
Total			870

Sources: *EFT Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires (EFT) 1986, 1999. Nishimoto 1996. ¹Author's estimate. ²Author's estimate based on information from Silawej Kanjanamukhda 1999. C: Urban church, located in the Amphoe Muang.

3.3.3. Independent churches in the other provinces

There are independent churches scattered throughout the country. Information is rather inaccurate. Only six churches returned the questionnaire in 1999.

In the following, the churches are presented by region.

Central Region (Phak Klang)

Of the eight independent churches in the Central Region (Phak Klang), only the Phonprasart Church in Suphanburi (49) returned the questionnaire. No information is available on the present status of Muang Kanchanaburi Church (31), and Songphai Church (19) in Nakorn Nayok. Kanchanaburi Church (4) belongs to Romklao Church. The Christian Directory of 1997 has listed at least two churches by the name Songphai Church, one in Bangkok, one in Nakorn Nayok. The church in the list given by the

¹⁴⁶Nishimoto 1996,337.

EFT Office refers to the church in Nakorn Nayok. Songphai Church is a rural church.¹⁴⁷

Phornprasart Church, Suphanburi (49)

The church is located in one of amphoes of Suphanburi Province. The beginning of the church could be connected to Samchuk Church. The church was established by the family of Miss Panya Kamolkasemsuk. She was the first Christian in family in 1969. In 1971 her mother received Christ after having been healed. It is often reported that healing has been important factor in the early stages of new local churches. Similar stories are told from other groups as well. Miss Panya opened a day nursery and began worship services in 1972. In 1980 she married Thira Sumamankun, a Bangkok Bible College graduate, who became the pastor of the church. In 1998 the church had 32 full members, and three persons were baptized in 1998.¹⁴⁸

Trad Church (35)

The ministry of the Trad Church began in 1975 when the World Wide Evangelistic Crusade opened a new evangelistic ministry in Trad Province, on the Southeastern border between Thailand and Cambodia. After that workers of the Thonburi Full Gospel Church followed up the contacts there. Prida Mothanaphrakhun, a medical doctor, and his family have been central persons in the church since 1979. In 1995 the church did not yet have a pastor; Dr. Prida was leading of the church. The Trad Church has received support from the Assemblies of God church in Hong Kong. Trad Church was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1984. There were 60 members in 1995.¹⁴⁹

Northern Region (Phak Nua)

Four of the ten independent churches in the Northern Region, Sanlao Thai Church (41) in Nan, Ruamchit Church (54) in Phayao, and Khao Dee (Good News, 65) Church in Chiang Rai returned the questionnaire. No information is available on the present status of Barn Haen Church (20) in Nan, Huay Kangpla Church (26) in Chiang Rai, Rom Phrakhun Maecharim Church (45) in Nan and Ko Da Church (46) in Lampang. Santisuk Church (27) in Mae Hong Son has possibly been closed.

¹⁴⁷(EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 23. Christian Directory 1997, 244, 295. By accident the province in the list given by the EFT Office was written as Bangkok. *Romklao khrobrob 20 pee*. 1999,8-9 (20 year anniversary publication).

¹⁴⁸Questionnaire 1999, (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 29. Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 314. Only one of the members has been a member of another church earlier.

¹⁴⁹Nishimoto 1996, 333. Dr. Prida was a member of Thonburi Full Gospel Church. This church is a Chinese church begun by the Finnish Free Foreign Mission in the 1950s. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 148-1953.

Sanlao Thai Church Nan (42)

Sanlao Thai Church is a rural church in Nan Province, quite far away from the provincial capital. The questionnaire was filled by an elder. The position of the pastor was vacant because the founder and pastor of the church, Duang Boonthep, had died. The elder answering the questionnaire informed that the church was searching for a larger church that could support it financially. Other older independent churches may be facing similar problems. Generally, the rural churches are struggling with economic self-reliance. The problem with self-reliance is one of the factors that explains the rather easily occurring switches of affiliation. It was said that the Sanlao Thai Church was established by missionaries, but it was not said of which mission agency. The number of members in the end of 1998 was not given. It was reported that two persons were baptized in 1998, and there were 22 members who had been members of another church earlier. The actual membership could be 50. The church was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1985.¹⁵⁰

Ko Da Church Lampang (46)

This church is also known as Ko Da Romklao Church. It was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1986. It has possibly been closed.¹⁵¹

Ruamchit Church (54)

Ruamchit Church in Phayao had 66 members in 1998, and 21 persons were baptized in 1998. The membership is comprised of Thais and Mian (Yao) ethnic minority. The church was established in 1987, and it joined the EFT in 1990. There seems to be close connection to Phayao Bible College.¹⁵²

Thalitha Koomi Church Mae Hong Son (64)

Thalitha Koom Church in Mae Hong Son is a small church with less than 50 members. It was possibly established by independent Korean missionaries. The membership possibly consists of the Hmong minority group.¹⁵³

Khao Dee Church in Chiang Rai (65)

¹⁵⁰Questionnaire 1999. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992, 28. The name of the elder was Somkuan Chitwaree.

¹⁵¹Information given by Silawej Kanjanamukhda June 1999. The church is not included the list of Romklao churches.

¹⁵²Questionnaire 1999. EFT 1992, 30

¹⁵³Information from Silawej Kanjanamukhda June 1999.

Khao Dee Church in Chiang Rai was established in 1990. There is a connection to the Phayao Bible College. The church had 60 members in the end of 1998, and it had established two daughter churches. It is the only church to announce that the church is using Northern Thai at the present. In the early years the churches in the North used Northern Thai. The switch to the Central Thai as the language of worship took place in the 1920s. (See Chapter 4.1.4). This attempt to return to the use of Northern Thai is interesting to note. There have been attempts to use Northeastern Thai in the Northeast. There is some ambivalence in using the local languages, but the reasons for this are rarely discussed.¹⁵⁴

Northeastern Region (Phak Esarn, Phak Tawanokchiangnua)

Of the nine independent churches in the northeastern region, only the Gospel Church of Nakorn-Ratchasima (6) and the Gospel Church of Ubon Ratchathani (13) returned the questionnaire. No information is available on the present status of the Ubon Church (Khrischak khong Phra Jesu Khrist, 38). The Post Office returned the questionnaire sent to the church. Yasothon Church (17) has possibly been closed.

Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima (6)

The Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima was founded by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1972. In 1999 it was registered as an independent church by the EFT, but the church itself informed that it still was in co-operation with the CMA. The church had 60 members in 1998. The pastor, Rev. Prasoot Chowadee was ordained in 1995.¹⁵⁵

Gospel Church, Ubon Ratchathani (13)

The Gospel Church in Ubon Ratchathani was originally established by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In the 1980s, the Gospel Church in Ubon still maintained its relation to the Gospel Church in Thailand and the CMA. I have come across the name Full Gospel Church as well. Ubon was the first place for the CMA to begin its ministry in Thailand in 1929. The Gospel Church in Ubon was accepted as a member of the EFT in 1974. In the end of 1998 the church had 80 members, and eight persons were baptized in 1998.¹⁵⁶

Southern Region (Phak Tai)

¹⁵⁴Questionnaire 1999. The Evangelical Covenant Church is one of the first conscious attempts to use Northeastern Thai and Northeastern music in the worship. Within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand the rural churches are often using Northeastern Thai, in some places Northern Khmer. The urban churches even in the Northeast are using Central Thai. The reason given is that the urban population does not consist of only Northeastern speakers.

¹⁵⁵Questionnaire 1999. EFT 1992, 22. Rev. Prasoot was ordained by Rev. Dr. Somdee Phusodsee.

¹⁵⁶Questionnaire 1999. EFT 1992, 23. Wells 1958, 200,201

There are three independent churches registered by the EFT in the South. Only Sahathai Takua Pa Church returned the questionnaire in 1999.

Gospel Church of Kantang (40)

The Gospel Church of Kantang is located in the Trang Province in the South. The American Presbyterian Mission had opened work there in 1910. The churches in Trang have an old revivalistic tradition. Dr. Sung had meetings in Trang in 1938-1939, and Rev. Suk Phongsnoi was the pastor of Trang Church for several years. One of the persons who received Christ during Dr. Sung's campaigns was Mrs. Wipha Kiatsaengsil. In 1978 she attended meetings in Bangkok where Dr. Yonggi Cho, from the Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul Korea, was the main speaker. Dr. Cho had said, referring to a group of ladies present in the meeting, that God had called them to establish new churches. When she returned to Kantang she wanted to establish a new church. This led to the establishment of an independent church; in 1982 she resigned with a few others from Kantang Church and the CCT. The new church, called the Gospel Church of Kantang (Khrischak Kittikhun Kantang) was accepted as member of the EFT in 1985. The Christian Directory informed that Damrongchai Ponlawat is the leader of the Church in 1999.¹⁵⁷

Sahathai Takua Pa Church (53)

Sahathai Takua Pa Church is an independent Lutheran church in the town of Takua Pa in the Phangnga Province on the coast of the Andaman Sea. The family of Dr. Herbert Gernand and Mrs. Sathaphon Na Thalang-Gernand, members of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod from the USA, founded the church. Mrs. Sathaphon is a Thai. After retirement they moved from USA to Takua Pa, where her family has been running a private school. In the late 1980s a church was established in Takua Pa. Dr. Gernard has been leading the work. He is not an ordained minister. The Sahathai Takua Pa Church has remained an independent church. It has not joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand nor the ministry of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, which in the 1990s concentrated its work in Bangkok.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Nishimoto 1996, 334. EFT 1992, 28. Christian Directory 1999, 317. Wells 1958, 124-128. Visions, dreams and healing are mentioned several times in Nishimoto's presentation. During Dr. Sung's campaign Ms. Wipha was 15 years old. She became a member of the CCT church in Kantang town. In the beginning her faith was not steadfast, but later she became the chairperson (prathan) of the Kantang Church. This means the chairperson of the Council of Elders.

¹⁵⁸Questionnaire 1999. In the 1980s there were discussions on co-operation between the Lutheran Mission in Thailand, that time consisting of the Norwegian Missionary Society, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong, and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. It was agreed to start with a literature project. Luther's Large Catechism and some other literature were published in Thai in 1985-1986. Mrs. Sathaporn was working as the translator. Later The LC-MS opened its own ministry, in the beginning as a refugee work, later as radio ministry and evangelistic outreach in Bangkok.

Muang Thungsong Church 92 (66)

It is reported that Muang Thungsong 92 Church (66), a small independent church in Nakorn Sri Thammarat is a splinter from Romklao Church

Table 15 summarizes the independent churches in provinces throughout the country, excluding the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and Chiang Mai.

Table 15. Provincial independent churches in 1999.

Name	Establ	EFT	Memb . 1998
Central Region			
Kanchanaburi Church, (4)		1972	--
Uloke Simuen Church, Kanchanaburi(7)		1973	50 ²
Songphai Church, Nakhon Nayok (19)		1977	--
Muang Kanchanaburi Church (31)		1980	--
Trad Church (35)	1975	1982	60 ³
Phonprasart Church, Suphanburi (49)		1987	30 ¹
Phra Jesu Khrist Muang Pattaya Church (52)		1990	50 ²
Phrakhun (Grace) Church, Chonburi (56)		1990	100 ²
Northern Region			
Phran Kratai Church, Kamphaengphet (9)		1973	50 ²
Ban Haen Church, Nan (20)		1978	--
Huay Kangpla Church, Chiang Rai (26)		1979	--
Santisuk Church, Mae Hongson (27)			--
Sanlao Thai Church Nan (42)		1985	50 ¹
Nakorn Lampang Church (43) C		1986	50 ²
Rom Phrakhun Maecharim Church, Nan (45)		1987	--
Ko Da Church, Lampang (46)		1987	--
Ruamchit Church, Phayao (54)	1987	1990	70
Thalitha Koom Church, Mae Hong Son (64)			40 ²
Khao Dee Church, Chiang Rai (65)	1990	c. 1993	60
Northeastern Region			
Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima (6) C		1972	60
Nongmuang Church, Buriram (12)			30 ²
Gospel Church Ubol Rachathani (13) C		1974	80
Yasothon Church (17)			--
Ban Mai nai Muang Loei Church, Loei (25) C		1979	60 ²
Khon Kaen Chinese Church, Khon Kaen (29) C		1980	100 ²
Ubon Church (Khrischak khong Phra Jesu Khrist) Ubon Rachathani (38) C		1983	--
Nong Kichitsamran Church, Buriram (39)		1984	50 ²
Ban Kudkhaopoon Church, Nakorn Phanom (51)		1988	30 ²
Southern Region			
Gospel Church of Kantang, Trang (40)	1982	1985	70 ²
Sahathai Takua Pa Church, Phangna (53)		1990	60
Thung Song Ch., Nakon Sri Thammarat (66)		c. 1993	30 ²
Total			1180

Sources: EFT *Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires (EFT) 1986, 1999. Nishimoto 1996. ¹Author's estimate. ²Author's estimate based on information from Silawej Kanjanamukhda 1999. C: Urban church, located in the Amphoe Muang (provincial capital).

3.4. EMERGING DENOMINATIONS

It is difficult to give an exact number of denominations or groups of local churches in the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand. The EFT 1998-1999 Directory has 27 organizations in the category of organizations involved in church planting. Most of these are organized denominations, and some are mission agencies. In the Christian Directory of 1999, 33 groups are presented, including also some independent churches that have several daughter churches: Romklao Churches, the New Life Churches, Santiphap Churches, Santisuk Churches, Muang Thai Churches and the Ruam Nimit (Vision Gospel) Churches. Santiphap Churches and Santisuk Churches were introduced in the previous chapter because there are only 2-3 small congregations in each. Muang Thai Churches, Vision Gospel Churches and New Life Churches are considerably larger, and there is a premeditated plan to expand the ministry by opening new local churches. The New Life Churches were already in the 1980s developing as distinct groups. The strategies are different. Muang Thai Churches and the Vision Gospel Churches appear to be modifications of the traditional denominations or mission organization approach; the New Life churches are adaptations to the social organization of Thailand.¹⁵⁹

3.4.1. Bangkok centered expansion

It is striking that most of the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area have or have had daughter churches in other provinces. Only few of the provincial churches have daughter churches, and even then these are situated near the mother church. The Metropolitan churches tend to expand to the whole country.

Muang Thai Church (34)

The Muang Thai Church has its roots in 1973, when six Thai Christians came together to seek ways to evangelize in Thailand. In April 1974, they formed a church called the Muang Thai Church – meaning the Church of the Thai country – which in January 1981 was accepted as a member of the EFT. Their aim was not only to establish a local congregation, but seek ways for evangelizing the entire country. This was to be accomplished by arranging training for future church workers. The founding members were university teachers, and in the beginning the church drew its members especially from students. Twenty persons were baptized in 1985. In 1986 the church had two daughter churches. The membership was 150, and attendance in worship services was around 100 persons 1987.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹EFT Directory 1989-1999, I-II. Christian Directory 1999, 171-198.

¹⁶⁰Muang Thai Church. Mimeograph 1984, 1-2. Church Planting Survey of EFT members. 1986. Questionnaire 1987. (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1985, 48.

Contact was established with the Korea Evangelical Church in order to arrange training. In 1980, a joint project, the Training Center of the Muang Thai Church, was started. Later the institute has been called the Muang Thai Theological Seminary. The Korea Evangelical Church and the Muang Thai Church raised funds for the land and the construction of the institute. Funds have also been received from other countries, including the USA, Canada, New Zealand, and from Chinese churches in Asia. The pastor, Rev. Dr. Nanthachai Mejudhon, and his wife, Mrs. Ubolwan, have studied theology at the Asbury Theological Seminary in the USA. Both husband and wife received the Doctor of Missiology degree in 1997.¹⁶¹

Muang Thai Church celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1994. A booklet was prepared for the occasion. In 1994 there were 13 daughter churches, three in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. In 1999 the number of daughter churches was 14, of which two were in the Metropolitan Area. Membership in the mother church was 140. The daughter churches are mostly located in the provincial capitals or major towns. The 20th anniversary publication contains pictures of the daughter churches. The daughter churches can be described as house churches. It is safe to assume that the membership does not exceed 50 members each. Some of them most likely have even less. My estimation is that the whole Muang Thai community consists of 800 to 1000 members.¹⁶²

Muang Thai Church has not been attempting to develop a large central church for the Metropolitan Area like Romkloa Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church. Expansion in the Metropolitan Area has taken place in the form of opening new churches. The membership in the mother church remained the same throughout the 1990s. A split took place in the 1990s. Rev. Dr. Phaitoon Hatthamas has established a new independent church, called Santisuk Church (55), which in 1999 consisted of a group of three local churches. (Chapter 3.3.1.) It is not known how many members of the Muang Thai Church followed him.¹⁶³

The Training Center was meant to offer a college-level course and a graduate-school course in theology. In 1985 the name was changed to Muang Thai Theological Seminary (*Sathaban Bundit Khristasanasart Muang Thai*). A three-year Master of Divinity and a two-year Master of Arts in Religion courses were offered to persons with a Bachelor degree in fields other than Theology. The aim was to train one hundred graduates by 1994. 16 students had enrolled by 1990. The Seminary and the church are located on the same premises, but have actually become separated. The

¹⁶¹Muang Thai Church 1984,2. The Training Center of Muang Thai Church. Mimeograph 1984, 1. *Phuan Phunam. Chabab thi 11*. Krungthep. Duean Pruesaphakhom - Mithunajon 1990, 34-35. (Leader's Companion, Magazine).

¹⁶²20 pee haeng Phrakhun lae Phraphon. Khrischak Muang Thai. 1994, 52-75, cover page.(20 years anniversary publication). Christian Directory 1999,191.

¹⁶³Sathaban bundit Khristasanasart Muang Thai. *Sine Anno*.(In the 1990s) Christian Directory 1999, 194.

Seminary is considered interdenominational.¹⁶⁴

The Muang Thai Church has prepared its own confessional statement. The Apostles' Creed is interpreted as the basic statement of the church. In teaching on sanctification, the concept of perfect holiness is rejected. The sacraments are interpreted as symbols. A new version of the Statement was printed in 1994. Most of the articles are the same. The article on the sacraments has been omitted, and an article on speaking in tongues has been added. In this article the Pentecostal understanding of speaking in tongues as the sign of the baptism in the Spirit is rejected. Speaking in tongues is interpreted as one of the spiritual gifts.¹⁶⁵

Ruam Nimit Church (The Gospel Vision Church) (67)

This church is mostly known by its Thai name. The term *nimit* occurs some times in the names of local churches, like Nimit Mai Church (the New Vision) of the Thailand Baptist Association. It is used in the Christian community, apparently as a translation for the English term vision. However, it carries only some of the connotations of the English term. Originally, the Thai term is connected to dreams and seeing visions in literal sense. It can be translated as sign and/or omen. In recent years another term, *wisaithat*, has been used instead of *nimit* when speaking about premeditated plans and visions concerning the future.

Ruam Nimit Church was established in 1990. Rev. Nirut Chankong, the pastor, used his home as the first meeting place. Before establishing Ruam Nimit Church, Rev. Nirut had served with several Pentecostal organizations. He was among the first students of the Bible school established by the Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM) in 1960. Most of the students came from rural congregations; Rev. Nirut has described himself jokingly as a *dek barn nok*, a term with pejorative connotations used for people living in remote rural areas.¹⁶⁶

Three men who later rose to prominent positions in the Pentecostal movement, Nirut Chankong, Wirachai Kowae and Samarn Wannakiat, attended the first course of this Bible School. Nirut Chankong and Wirachai Kowae became the pastors of two fast-growing local churches, and leaders in national Pentecostal organizations. Rev. Nirut became the pastor of Jai Samarn Church of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, later the Full Gospel Assemblies in Thailand. Rev. Dr. Wirachai became the pastor of Romyen Church and a leader of the Assemblies of God in Thailand. Rev. Samarn has

¹⁶⁴The Training Center of Muang Thai Church 1984, 2-3. *Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 35. *Phiti mob parinyabat 1990. Sathaban Pundit Khristasanasart. Krungthep* 24.2.1990. 10-11. (Graduation ceremony of the Muang Thai Theological Seminary, mimeograph.)

¹⁶⁵Muang Thai Church 1984, 3-5. *20 pee haeng Phrakhun*, 1994, 16, 17.

¹⁶⁶Kettunen 1996, 130,207,255. Ruohomäki 1988, 112-115. On the conflict with the Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission: Ruohomäki 1988, 125-126. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 266-269. A short biography of Rev. Nirut is provided in *Thamniab...* 1994, 47-48.

been working in the North with the Assemblies of God. Their departures from the connections of the FFFM caused disappointments. Later, Rev. Nirut evaluated the Finns good at pioneer work, but not as capable organizers as the Americans were.¹⁶⁷

Rev. Nirut was the pastor of Jai Samarn Church since 1972 until the late 1980's. The exact date of his departure cannot be read from material available. His influence was crucial in introducing the Korean cell group model to Thai Protestant community. Jai Samarn was one of the first churches where this model was applied. It is striking that Nishimoto almost omits Rev. Nirut in his presentation of Jai Samarn Church. The actions of missionaries and Thai leaders are recorded in detail, Rev. Nirut's name is mentioned only in passing. However, he was the pastor of the church during its most dynamic expansion.¹⁶⁸

A crisis arose at Jai Samarn Church in the late 1980s. The sources available do not give information on the crisis, but it led to Rev. Nirut resignation. Rev. Manoosak Kamolmatyakool became the new pastor. Part of the membership followed Rev. Nirut to Ruam Nimit Church, and the first worship service of the new church was held on October 12, 1990. Local churches from other provinces have joined in. In 1996 there were 24 local churches in the Ruam Nimit group: in Bangkok, in the North (Chiang Mai, Uttradit, Tak, Chiang Rai, and Phetchaboon), in the Northeast (Kalasin, Maha Sarakham and Loei), and in the Central Region (Rayong, Srakaeu and Chantaburi). It is openly admitted that local churches from other denominations have joined in, at least some from the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand. These are possibly churches, which had connections to Jai Samarn Church when Rev. Nirut was its pastor. Probably most of the churches in the Ruam Nimit group have transferred from other denominations. This has happened with surprisingly little criticism. The membership of the Ruam Nimit Church in Bangkok could be 200. Two of the provincial churches informed that in 1996 they had a membership of 80 persons. The others are most likely smaller. The whole Ruam Nimit community could be 1400 –1500 members.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷Kettunen 1996, 130. Ruohomäki 1988, 122-125. Vaurula Ontermaa 1988, 295-300. The problem of poor organization was at least partly a theological question. The Finns were following the principle of the autonomy of the local church. Any organization above local church does not fit comfortably with this principle. In addition, the Finns were not able to give room quickly enough for the gifted young preachers. The other groups provided better opportunities to them, better funding, but apparently also more freedom in their ministries.

¹⁶⁸Ruohomäki 1988, 137-138, Nishimoto 210, 214-217. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 298-299, 303. It is understandable, that Jai Samarn Church is not too keen on recording Rev. Nirut's ministry, but omitting his ministry is distorting the facts.

¹⁶⁹Nishimoto 1996,308-309. Kettunen 1996,71,72.

Table 16 Muang Thai Church and Ruam Nimit Church.

	Estab.	EFT	Members
Muang Thai Church (34)	1974	1981	140
--Muang Thai daughter churches combined		--	760 ¹
Ruam Nimit Church (67)	1990	c.1993	200 ²
--Provincial Ruam Nimit Churches, combined			1200 ²
Total			2300

Sources: (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires (EFT) 1986, 1999. Nishimoto 1996. ¹Author's estimate. ²Author's estimate based on information from Nishimoto.

3.4.2. The New Life Churches - expansion by division

The New Life Churches are a group of independent churches that have been developing as a distinct group. There are some other local churches in other denominations which have the term New Life (*Chivit Mai*) in their names. Although the missionaries of the Overseas Missionary Society had an important role in the beginning, the churches have been developing independently. Later, independent missionaries have been working with the New Life Churches. They differ from Muang Thai Churches and Ruam Nimit Churches in the patterns of expansion. The New Life Churches have been expanding by dividing the local churches.

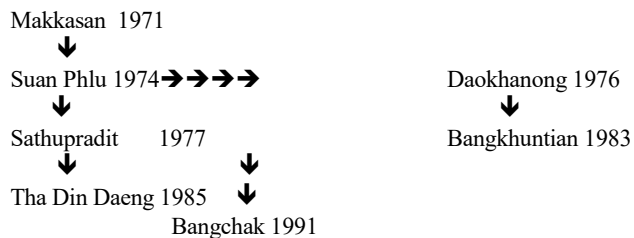
The New Life churches began in a small student hostel for male students run by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) in the Makkasan area of Bangkok. The hostel was opened in 1969, with two missionaries in residence. The hostel was not their main assignment. By 1977, ten students were living at the hostel. For a while the hostel was used as a center for Christian work among university students.

At that time the Overseas Missionary Fellowship did not have a policy for church planting in Bangkok. In 1971, the missionaries running the center were concerned with reaching out to the neighborhood, and a Sunday evening program was commenced. The results were scant. According to Bill Merry, who was involved at Makkasan from the beginning, a crucial change took place on New Year's Eve of the same year. Some missionaries and Thai Christians gathered for prayer at the Bangkok Bible College, which had been opened the same year. Two of the students staying at Makkasan made a new commitment, and in the beginning of 1972, a full Sunday program was commenced. The first leadership group of the church consisted of Mr. Bill Merry and Dr. Henry Breidenthal of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, and the students Somporn Sirikonkarn, Seth Chansong and Chumsaeng Reongjaroensook. The missionaries participated on a voluntary or part-time basis; Bill Merry was teaching English at Thammasart University, and Henry Breidenthal was the director of the

Bangkok Bible College.¹⁷⁰

Twenty persons, mostly students, were baptized during the first year. The premises at Makkasan became crowded. The idea to expand the work by dividing was gradually developed. Some families from the Suan Phlu area, a few kilometers from Makkasan, became members, and in December 1974 a new church was opened there.¹⁷¹

The following chart shows how the expansion has taken place since then. The first division in 1974 was made because of the inadequate premises at Makkasan. The some later divisions were caused by leadership problems. By 1975, the students who formed the first leadership group were finishing their studies. This meant that there were several possible leaders in Makkasan. In 1976 it was decided to open a new church in Daokhanong, in the Thonburi side of the Capital. Chumsaeng Roengjaroensook with fifteen members from Makkasan moved there. Some members of the Suan Phlu Church were witnessing in Sathupradit area. Seth Chansong became the pastor of the new church that was opened there in February 1977. In 1987 Tha Din Daeng Church was mentioned as one of the New Life Churches. In 1999 it was not mentioned any more. It may have been closed or it may have joined another group.¹⁷²



The membership of the New Life Churches is presented in Table 17. In addition to the churches in Bangkok, the New Life Churches were in 1973 supporting a church in Angthong Province in Central Thailand. This church has not been included in the group of New Life Churches.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰Bill Merry, New Life in Bangkok. A story of Church Growth in the New Life Churches. 1977, 1 (Mimeograph). East Asia Millions (London), September 1969, 83. East Asia Millions (London), May 1971, 42.

¹⁷¹Merry, New Life in Bangkok, 1977, 1-2.

¹⁷²Merry, New Life in Bangkok, 1977. Questionnaire May 1987. Overseas Missionary Fellowship, Bangkok. May 1987. (List of the New Life Churches and the OMF-related churches). Policy statement of the New Life Churches, October 1978.

¹⁷³Merry, New Life in Bangkok, 1977. Questionnaire May 1987. Overseas Missionary Fellowship Office May 1987. EFT survey on church planting 1986.

Table 17. New Life Churches . Presented in order of age.

Name	Est.	EFT	Members . 1987	Members . 1998
Makkasan New Life Church (11)	1971	1974	40 ¹	50
Suan Phlu New Life Church (33)	1974	1980	40 ¹	180
Dao Khanong New Life Church (36)	1976	1983	30	40
Sathupradit New Life Church (32)	1977	1980	40	40
Bangkhuntian New Life Church (47)	1983	1987	25	70
Tha Din Daeng New Life Church	1985		20 ¹	-
Bangchak New Life Church (57)	1991	1991		50
Northeast ministry, (7churches)				200
Total			195	630

Sources: (EFT) *Raigan prajampee* 1992. Thailand Christian Directory 1999. Questionnaires 1986, 1987, 1999. ¹Author's estimate. Number in brackets refers to the list by EFT Office in 1999.

The New Life Churches could be described as "house churches". They are using houses or town houses as the places of worship. However, the house churches seem to be only a temporary solution. If possible, the churches tend to build special church buildings. In July 1997, the Makkasan Church building was newly built, and the Suan Phlu Church was undergoing a building project for a four story multipurpose building. The names of the churches refer to their locations. The membership of each church has been kept low, making it possible to maintain the family-like relationship between the members of each local church. During the 1990s the growth of New Life Churches in Bangkok has slackened. The membership has been increased only little from 1987. The exception is Suan Phlu Church which has experienced dynamic growth. It is likely that the New Life Churches have been struggling with unstable membership like many other groups. There have been accessions all the time. In the 1999 questionnaire, four of the six New Life Churches in Bangkok gave information about baptisms in the previous year. Roughly 20 baptisms were recorded that year. Because the membership increased only slightly within ten years, it is likely that the churches have suffered loss of members as well. Tha Din Daeng New Life Church has been closed or it has joined another group.¹⁷⁴

The New Life churches have expanded in the Northeast during the 1990s. The ministry was begun as a follow-up of relatives of Suan Phlu members in 1990. Peter Elks, an independent missionary working with the New Life Churches, had moved to Buriram the previous year. Rev. Prasert Kusawadee, the pastor of the Suan Phlu Church was commissioned by Suan Phlu Church for the ministry in the Northeast in March 1992. In the Policy paper of the New Life Churches (in Thai), Rev. Prasert is mentioned as the leader of the ministry, called the New Life Mission, *Phantakit Chivit*

¹⁷⁴Thailand New Life Churches –Latest News. July 1st 1997. Internet Home page re-print. It is possible, though not likely, that members in the daughter churches have been counted in Suan Phlu as well. In the 1999 questionnaire Suan Phlu informed that it has six daughter churches; these are the same as the provincial New Life Churches.

Mai. This ministry is presented as a joint ministry of the New Life Churches, but in practice it seems to be the interest of the Suan Phlu Church. On the New Life Homepages on the Internet, maintained by Mr. Steve Taylor, an independent missionary working with the New Life Churches, Rev. Praset is introduced as a missionary. The practice to apply the term missionary to people sent to work among new areas or ethnic groups within the same country has become used among some evangelical circles. Generally, the churches in Thailand do not use the term missionary for opening the work in new locations within the borders of the country.¹⁷⁵

By 1996 there were seven New Life Churches in the Southern part of the Northeastern Region, in Nakorn Ratchasima Buriram, Roi Et and Surin. Statistics on membership are not available, but the churches are house churches, mostly rural or in small market towns. The combined membership could be 200.¹⁷⁶

Ambivalence in the relationship with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship can be observed. Some of its missionaries were involved with the work at Makkasan and Suan Phlu in the early years. The basic strategies were developed during those years. Many of the present New Life Church leaders were already participating in the Makkasan Church in the early seventies as students. When the Overseas Missionary Fellowship started its church planting project in Bangkok in 1979, the New Life churches continued as a group without official connection to it.¹⁷⁷

When the Overseas Missionary Fellowship started its church planting project in Klong Chan, a northeastern suburb of Bangkok, it apparently hoped to co-operate with the New Life Churches. For various reasons this has led to a situation in which the churches established by the OMF have formed their own group. When the Klong Chan - project was commenced, the New Life Churches already formed a distinct group. For the OMF, the project was an experiment to develop new strategies for church planting in the city. The co-operation with the New Life Churches was of secondary interest. The work was started as an intensive home-visit program in a new residential area. The project was the first of its kind carried out by the mission agencies, and it has influenced the other missions. There are two independent missionary families working with the New Life Churches.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵*Klum Khrishak Chivit Mai*.1996. (New Life Churches) Policy paper. New Life Mission. 1997 Internet homepage reprint. New Life Mission. Video tape. Questionnaire 1999. I find the practice to list people sent to open new work within the same country as missionaries confusing. The Asian churches are increasingly involved in cross-cultural mission, and if also new openings within the church's own country are included, statistics become arbitrary. Thailand is such a unified country that sending people from one part of the country to another hardly qualifies as mission work in the traditional sense. In addition, the New Life Mission in the Northeast mostly concentrates on the Northeastern ethnic Thai.

¹⁷⁶New Life Mission videotape. In giving locations of the rural churches the province is not always mentioned.

¹⁷⁷Merry, *New Life in Bangkok*, 1977, 2, 3. Overseas Missionary Fellowship Office May 1987.

It seems that the New Life Churches are very eclectic in choosing their partners. Attempts to build co-operation with the OMF have failed. Simultaneously they have welcomed independent missionaries into their inner circle. It is possible to find a similar trend in other independent churches. There are missionaries involved in many of the independent churches. Information is deficient, but apparently most of these missionaries are independent, supported by their local home churches. There seems to be a whole new kind of network developing. The individual local churches in Asia and other parts of the world seek their counterparts directly. This again accelerates the on-going fragmentation. For the independent churches in Thailand, the question is at least partly about autonomy. Co-operation with independent missionaries could be felt less risky; they are not able to influence the work in the same way as larger mission organizations with larger funding could try to.

The New Life Churches have tried to keep a balance between the autonomy of the local church and establishing a denomination. A Seven Point Policy of the New Life Churches was adopted in October 1978:

- “1. The Communion Service is held every week.
2. Baptism is by immersion.
3. The whole Bible is to be taught, and to be preached exegetically.
4. The churches stress fellowship and are concerned for all people from every level of society of either sex and of all ages.
5. Each local church is independent and has its own constitution, though similar to others in the group of churches.
6. The group of churches has fellowship together like brothers and sisters with Christ as the Head.
7. Obey the last command (of Christ) to go and preach everywhere.”

The leaders of the New Life Churches have regular monthly meetings. In January 1987, the leaders agreed on a policy to develop fellowship between different leadership levels, to co-operate in establishing new churches, and to take care of the fellowship between the churches. This apparently was a response to the new attitude of the EFT towards registering independent churches.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸Geoff Case, How to eat an Elephant. South East Millions (London) February/March 1981, 4-5. Geoff Case was leading the project. The methods used in Klong Chan were used as model for a church planting project of the Lutheran Mission in Lad Phrao area. The Klong Chan -project was studied by other missions as well.

Steve and Flor Taylor are supported by Ivy Cottage Evangelical Church in Manchester, England, and the Christ is Exalted Community Church in Manila, the Philippines. During his first year at the All Nations Christian College Steve Taylor made a visit to Thailand to see the work of OMF missionaries. During this trip connection to New Life Churches was made. By 1997 they had been working with the New Life Churches for 15 years. The Taylors have been involved in church planting, counseling and leadership training. The other independent missionary family connected to the New Life Churches is Peter and Ruth Elks. They have been connected to Sathupradit Church, and since 1989 they have been working in the Northeast. Taylor Family Homepage 1997. Reprint. New Life Mission. Introduction leaflet in Thai and English. Sine Anno, around 1997.

¹⁷⁹OMF Office, May 1987. Minutes of a meeting of the leaders of the New Life Churches January

In 1994, the leaders of the New Life Churches had a meeting where more formal co-operation was agreed on. The name the New Life Group, *Klum Chivit Mai*, was adopted. A new policy statement was prepared. New efforts to strengthen co-operation between the New Life Churches in Bangkok were made. The 1978 and 1996 policy statements are rather similar in content. In 1996, there were only 4 points. Around 1997, a two-year leadership-training program for the New Life Churches was arranged on Saturday nights at the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary. The 1996 policy statement is presented here.¹⁸⁰

- “1.None of the churches is above others. The Group is held together like brothers and sisters.
- 2.The churches in the Group help each other financially, but this assistance is unofficial by nature.
- 3.Assistance in leadership. This means that if one of the churches lack leaders, the other churches will give help, e.g. sending preachers.
- 4.The Group does not have a central constitution, but each church is independent. Administration shall be arranged according to each place.” (T)¹⁸¹

The basic strategy of expansion by division was not initially planned, but it proved to be the solution to the problem of the overcrowded premises in Makkasan. An important factor was also that from the beginning there were several possible leaders. None of them could claim the leadership position because they were of the same age and had completed equal studies. A struggle for leadership and a resulting split could have easily occurred, had the strategy been to enlarge the existing body at Makkasan. The strategy of expanding by division functioned as a safety valve. Division gave more room of movement, and the unity of the group could be maintained on a new level.

3,1987. Seth Chansong, interview May 19, 1987. Policy statement of the New Life Churches, October 1987. However, the information on the roles of the missionaries has been received mostly from the missionaries themselves; the point of view of the New Life Church leaders may be slightly different.

¹⁸⁰*Klum Khrischak Chivit Mai* 1996. The Bangkok New Life Churches, 1997. Internet Homepage reprint

¹⁸¹*Klum Khrischak Chivit Mai* 1996.

3.5 CELL GROUP CHURCHES

The Romkiao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church represent a new type of the church structure in Thailand. They have many similarities. Both are centrally organized: the membership is divided into cell groups for prayer and Bible study; and the establishment of a network of daughter churches is directed by the central church in Bangkok. Both have been growing and expanding exceptionally rapidly. The worship meetings of both churches are characterized by singing with hand clapping and loud worship with speaking in tongues. The leaders of both churches have distanced themselves from the mission-established Pentecostal groups.¹⁸²

The organizational structure of these churches has been influenced by the Korean central churches. The decisive influences were received in the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s. The organizational structures of the Korean central churches were already then fully developed. The reason for the interest in the Korean churches was their spiritual life, rapid growth and expansion.¹⁸³

In recent years, fast-growing, centrally directed churches, where the membership is divided into cell groups, have been recorded from different parts of the world. In Korea, where these churches were first recorded, they have been called central churches. Other terms used include cell group churches, and house churches. They have also been called “new paradigm” churches and even “new apostolic churches”. Here I have chosen the term cell group churches because it describes the structure of these churches.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸²Anuson khrob rob 4 pee. Khrischak Romkiao. 1983, 19. (4th Anniversary Yearbook. Romkiao Church). Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep. The Hope of Bangkok Church. 1986 (a presentation booklet in Thai). Programs of the Riddeed and Khrischak conferences have been published annually. Ruohomäki 1988, 139. Edward England, Church that won't stop growing. Renewal. No 134, July 1987, 8.

¹⁸³On the Full Gospel Central Church: John W. Hurston and Karen Hurston. Caught in the Web. Cell Unit System at Full Gospel Central Church Seoul, Korea. Church Growth International. Second printing 1978. Jaakko Mäkelä. Study tour to Korea. Report to the Lutheran Mission in Thailand 1981. The book written by the Hurstons is a non-critical account written by close associates who were working with Dr. Yonggi Cho during the formative years of the church. Dr. Cho presents his own recollection on the beginnings of the cell group system in: Paul Yonggi Cho with Harold Hostetter. Successful Home Cell Groups. Bridge Publishing, Inc. South Plainfield, New Jersey, USA. 1981.

¹⁸⁴The internationally best known of the Korean Central Churches is the Full Gospel Central Church. Others include Yong Nak Presbyterian Church, Chung Hyeon Presbyterian Church, Kwang Lim Methodist Church, and others. See: Bradley J. Thompson, A Study of New Testament and Twentieth Century House Churches with Application for Moscow. International School of Theology. 1996, 6-10. Online URL: <http://leaderu.com/isot/docs/hcmoscow.html>. June 19, 2000. The term New Apostolic Churches is used in: The New Apostolic Churches. Edited by C. Peter Wagner. Regal Books, 1998. Online URL: <http://www.glory-of-zion.org/achurchright.htm>. June 2000. “New paradigm” churches is used by Donald E. Miller. (Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium.* University of California Press 1997.) Review of the book in: Encounter 60:3. Book Reviews. Christian Theological Seminary. Online URL: http://www.cts.edu/Encounter/60-3_Reviews.htm.

The leadership of the cell group churches in Thailand is highly personalized and centralized. Western authors seem to look upon the cell group churches as networks without hierarchy. This does not apply to the cell group churches in Thailand. They are strictly hierarchical and the power to make decisions is concentrated in the hands of the pastor and the pastoral team initially formed by the pastor.¹⁸⁵

The Hope of Bangkok Church has been involved in controversies of which first-hand written material is hard to find. All correspondence concerning the independent churches was in 1987 and still in 1999 considered confidential by the Office of the EFT. Material obtained through other means must be relied on at this stage.

The definition of the membership is not clear. According to the constitutions of most of the independent churches, people who have made a public profession of faith, but have not yet been baptized, are included in the membership, usually as a special category. For most of the independent churches, this does not present an extensive statistical problem, because there are at a given time only few believers not yet baptized. For the Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church, the difference between the baptized membership and the total number of believers may be remarkable. It has not been possible to consult the membership statistics of either of the churches; statements of membership are based on questionnaires and other information.

3.5.1. Romklao Church

The Romklao Church was founded in April 1979. In 1987, the estimated membership of the church was 1000, with an additional 1000 in the daughter churches. The number of daughter churches in 1987 was eight, and it had grown to 18 in 1991 and to 20 in 1999. The founding pastor and the leader of the church is Rev. Wan Phetchsongkram. For Bible study, prayer, and counseling, the members are organized into cell groups, with no more than twenty persons in each. New believers are immediately led to a cell group. Further, the cell groups are organized into districts. The Romklao Church was one of the first churches to implement this strategy in Thailand.¹⁸⁶

Wan Phetchsongkram was born in Songhkla in the South. He was a "temple boy" in a Buddhist temple for several years. While staying at the temple, he attended a Catholic high school for some time. The warmth and care he experienced at the school made a strong impact on him. At the age of 17, he was ordained a Buddhist novice and three

¹⁸⁵“These groups don’t want to be called denominations. Denominations usually own property of the local church, have a hierarchy, and tend to limit the freedom of the local churches, etc. These groups are networks or fellowships of churches. They are post-denominational.” Review of The New Apostolic Churches. Online URL:<http://www.ngba.org/thenew.htm>. June 2000.

¹⁸⁶*Anuson khrob rob 4 pee*, 1983, 9-10. (4th Anniversary Yearbook, Romklao Church). *Anuson khrob rob pee thi 7, Khrisak Romklao, Krungthep*. 1986. (Seventh Anniversary Yearbook, Romklao Church). Wan Phetchsongkram at a consultation on church planting arranged by the EFT May 19, 1987. (Author's notes). Questionnaire 1987. Update Christian Directory 1992, 148.

years later a monk. He attained the Baryan five examination in Buddhism, which qualified him as a teacher. After five years as a monk he left monkhood, married, and moved to Bangkok. In Bangkok he came into contact with the Thonburi Baptist Chapel (Sala Christian Thonburi), became a Christian, and after a while entered the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary. He became well known as a preacher and a teacher, especially in the apologetic approach to Buddhism. In 1972 he conducted a series of lectures on Buddhism at the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary. The lectures, one of the first major works on Buddhism written by Thai Christians, were published in Thai and in English.¹⁸⁷

The beginnings of the Romklao Church must be studied in connection to developments within the Thailand Baptist Association, which entered Thailand in 1949 after China was closed for missionaries. The first missionaries to Thailand were former missionaries to China. Their first task was to evangelize among ethnic Chinese. The first church in Bangkok, later called the Grace Baptist Church, was organized in 1951 with 15 members: Americans, Chinese and Indians. The Immanuel Baptist Church, the first Thai church, was established in 1953. In 1998 the membership of the Thailand Baptist Association was altogether 3840 in 48 local churches and 19 worship groups.¹⁸⁸

Around 1970, the condition of the churches caused concern. The growth had stagnated; the membership (excluding the expatriates) which was 606 in 1972, was only 608 in 1976, and had in 1974 dropped even to 596. In 1971, the Mission decided not to continue to support the local churches. The result was much similar to what happened in the Presbyterian Mission in 1894. Growth slackened and the relationship between the churches and the Mission became tense.¹⁸⁹

In 1975, encouraged by experiences in Singapore, some of the missionaries began to search for a new strategy. After a while, four Thai pastors, including Wan Phetchsongkram, were invited to further develop the ideas. The years 1976-1978 were years of testing the plan, known as the Bangkok Urban Strategy. The plan was received with mixed feelings. Some pastors feared that the starting of new churches would drain strength from their churches; others felt that the traditional way of

¹⁸⁷Hill 1982, 95-96. Wan Phetchsongkram. Talk in the Shade of the Bo Tree. Translated and edited by Frances E Hudgins. Printed by Thai Gospel Press. 1975, 7-8. *Anuson khrob rob pee thi 7*, 1986.

¹⁸⁸Hill 1982, 35-40. Summary of Bangkok Baptist Churches. August 1985. Mimeograph, Thailand Baptist Mission. Membership statistics 1994-1998. Thailand Baptist Churches Association. In Thai. By 1985, the community had grown to 1015 members in 21 churches or worship groups. One of these, the Calvary Baptist Church was an expatriate church. After 1985 the Baptist churches experienced rapid growth, between 1985 and 1993 the membership was tripled. After that the growth has been much slower, only 760 members between 1994 and 1998; even from these 400 members were from Tabernacle Baptist Church (Phlappala), which joined the Baptist Churches Association in 1996.

¹⁸⁹Membership Statistics 1972-1984. Thailand Baptist Mission. Mimeograph. Hill 1982, 41. On the events in 1894-1895 and their impact in the Northern Thailand: Swanson 1984, 94-113.

opening mission-supported chapels was the only feasible way to establish new churches. Only a few showed enthusiasm. During the years 1978-1981, the plan was implemented in a couple of the churches.¹⁹⁰

The success of the Bangkok Urban Strategy was limited. Several reasons can be noted. The Baptist community was not united. Part of the membership was Chinese, part Thai. This ethnic division may not have been highly visible, but it certainly created some tension. After the support was withdrawn, the relationship between the churches and the Mission was tense. The missionaries were divided to some extent, only a few showed enthusiasm. The community was loosely organized; some of the local churches had only weak contacts to the others. Indigenizing the strategy failed. The missionaries developed the strategy; and in the next stage some leading Thai pastors were invited to join the planning. Apparently the ideas were not shared with all the churches so that they would have actively been involved in the process of developing the strategy.¹⁹¹

The organization of the Bangkok Urban Strategy was set up according to the pattern of American evangelistic organizations. It had its own administration, but it co-operated with the local churches. That was the weakest point of the strategy. It was possible to by-pass the churches; the churches were not responsible for the outreach, but were only co-operating in it if they so wished. Wan Phetchsongkram's later emphasis on the importance of the church, and his criticism toward Christian organizations, is apparently influenced by his experiences with the implementation of the Bangkok Urban Strategy.¹⁹²

Wan Phetchsongram became the principal of the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary. During a visit to America in October 1978, he got a vision of how the church in Thailand should be developed. In his own writings he emphasizes the theological nature of the vision on the church; in representations written about him in English, the Pentecostal understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Apparently these were two different experiences which led to a conflict with the (Southern) Baptist community in Thailand.¹⁹³

According to Rev. Wan, he warned the missionaries in Thailand and the denominational leaders in America that the Bangkok Urban Strategy was doomed to

¹⁹⁰Hill 1982, 52-54, 56-61. 63-82. Bangkok Urban Strategy. Thailand Baptist Mission 1981, 3-5. Mimeograph.

¹⁹¹Hill 1982, 54, 70. Summary of Baptist Churches, 1985. The Ratburana Church (Chapel) is an example. It was an independent church, member of EFT. At the same time it had borrowed money from Baptist Church Loan Fund, and was considered to be a Baptist Church, listed as a local church of the Thailand Baptist Association.

¹⁹²Bangkok Urban Strategy 1981, 58.

¹⁹³*Anuson khrob rob pee thi 7*, 1986. Ruohomäki 1988, 139.

fail. The plan called to establish small house churches. This was the weakest point of the strategy. The small house churches would remain weak for a long time. The correct way would be to establish one strong central church, and then divide it into smaller cell groups. Thus the faith of the new Christians would be strengthened in participating in larger community from the beginning. The leaders were already committed to the strategy, and advised him to join it. He said he could not do that.¹⁹⁴

When he returned to Thailand, Rev. Wan invited the students of the Baptist Theological Seminary to a meeting where he informed them about his plans. Six of them followed him. In April 1979 the new church was begun in his home with 15 people attending. The founding group was thus comparatively large, highly motivated, and also trained. Some hope for reconciliation was expressed by the Baptists; in 1982 Ronald C. Hill, the administrator of the Thailand Baptist Mission, still presented the Romklao church as a Baptist church.¹⁹⁵

The name Romklao (Divine protection) was selected for the new church. The meetings were first held at the Baptist Student Center for one year, after that for short periods at the Indra Hotel and the Catholic Mother Dei School. In 1981, the church rented a set of shop-houses on Asoke-Din Daeng Road. The church building in Huay Kwang district was completed in 1988.¹⁹⁶

The membership of the Romklao Church has been growing rapidly. The figures on membership 1979-1987 are estimations, given by Rev. Wan. The daughter churches may have had an additional thousand members in 1987. The 1995 and 2000 figures is for all the Romklao churches according to the World Churches Handbook..¹⁹⁷

Table 18. Development of the membership of the Romklao Church.

April 1979	15
1980	60
1981	250
1985	700
1987	1000
1995	2370
(2000)	3180

Sources: Ruohomäki 1988, 139. Wan Phetchsongkram, interview May 13, 1987. World Churches Handbook 1997, 815. Figure for 2000 is a projection.

¹⁹⁴ Wan Phetchsongkram, interview June 3, 1999. Tape.

¹⁹⁵ Wan Phetchsongkram in a consultation on church planting arranged by the EFT May 19, 1987. (Author's notes). Hill 1982, 96. Ruohomäki 1988, 139.

¹⁹⁶ Ruohomäki 1988, 139. Wan Phetchsongkram, interview May 13, 1987.

¹⁹⁷ Ruohomäki 1988, 139, Wan Phetchsongkram, interview May 13, 1987. Questionnaire, May 1987. In the questionnaire the membership is not announced. World Churches Handbook 1997, 815 gives following information: Community in 1990 3,130; in 1995 4,750; in 2000 6,370. Membership in 1990 1,560; in 1995 2,370; in 2000 3,180.

Table 19. Baptisms at Romklao Church

1981	20
1982	79
1983	19
1984	92
1985	81
Total	291

Source: *Anuson khrob rob pee thi 7*, 1986

In 1985, the membership was 700, but only a total of 291 persons were baptized by the church during its existence. This could mean that more than half of the members were Christians who had joined the Romklao Church. However, it is more likely that people, who were recorded as believers but had not yet been baptized, were counted as members. In 1985, when 81 persons were baptized, it was informed that 530 persons were led to "receive the faith". The figures given in the World Churches Handbook 1997 differ from the figures given above. However, figures in Table 18 for years 1979-1987 are closer to figures for "community" than "membership" given in the World Churches Handbook. This indicates that the figures given in 1979-1987 include people who have made a public profession of faith but have not yet been baptized. The 1995 figure is for "membership", meaning baptized adults.¹⁹⁸

The Romklao Church has experienced divisions in the 1990s. The Tabernacle Baptist Church (Phlapphla Church) was organized in 1993 as a result of dissatisfaction. The membership was around 100 persons. Provincial churches in Surat Thani, Kampaengphet, Lampang and Chiang Mai followed the Phlapphla Church. In 1996 the Phapphla Church joined the Baptist Churches Association. The membership was then 245. The provincial churches had not yet joined the Baptist Churches Association. It is reported that Muang Thungsong 92 Church (66), a small independent church in Nakorn Sri Thammarat, is a splinter from Romklao Church.¹⁹⁹

Rev. Wan has written several books where he explains his vision on the church. Romklao Church has prepared its book of policies and proceeds. Rev. Wan is one the most theologically oriented among the leaders of the independent churches. His special interest has been in the soteriological significance of the church.

¹⁹⁸EFT survey on church planting, 1986. World Churches Handbook 1997, 815.

¹⁹⁹ Nishimoto 1996, 339-340. Baptist Membership statistics 1994-1998.

3.5.2. The Hope of Bangkok Church (The Hope of Thai People Foundation, the Hope Place, the Hope of God, Bangkok)

The Hope of Bangkok Church was established in 1981. The founder of the church is Dr. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak. He comes from a Buddhist family with Chinese ancestry and he became a Christian in Australia, where he was studying for a doctorate degree in Economics. In Australia he was in contact with the Australian Pentecostals, and had studies also in Theology. Dr. Kriengsak has withdrawn from the formal leadership of the Hope of Bangkok Church and Mr. Phitsanunart Sritawong has become the pastor. Mr. Phitsanunart is married to Dr. Kriengsak's younger sister Sunee.²⁰⁰

The Hope of Bangkok Church has also become the center of an international fellowship. This is called the Hope of God Movement. The Hope of Seattle was the first daughter church to be planted internationally in 1988. In 2000 there were reported to be more than 30 churches in the Hope of God Movement in major cities in USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Taiwan. Dr. Kriengsak, using the name Joseph C. Wongsak, is said to be the leader of the international fellowship.²⁰¹

After returning to Thailand from Australia, Dr. Kriengsak began to establish a new church called the Hope of Bangkok Church. In the beginning, the founding group used an empty room on the top floor of the Bangkok Christian Hospital, and later the Hospital chapel was the place of worship. In 1983, the church moved to the Ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel, and in 1984 it rented the Oscar movie theatre on New Phetchaburi Road. The Thailand Bible Seminary was established in 1985. The present premises in Klongtoey area were bought in 1989.²⁰²

²⁰⁰*Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep*. 1986. Edward England, Church that won't stop growing. Renewal, No 134. July 1987, 6-8. According to the questionnaire in 1990, Dr. Kriengsak has received the Certificate of Theology at Laundeston College of Theology, and Diploma in Theology at Vision College, and was enrolled for graduate studies in Missiology at Pasific College of Graduate Studies. Carolyn Boyd, The Apostle of Hope. The Dr. Kriengsak Story. Sovereign World, Chichester, West Sussex, England. 1991, 17-32, 106-107. Boyd gives information on Dr. Kriengsak's childhood and youth. His father, a hard working and disciplined man, ran a family business. Dr. Kriengsak's early childhood years were economically hard, but later the family became wealthy. Young Kriengsak was a hard-working and bright student. As a high school student he received a scholarship for one year of studies in the USA. After returning from America he completed the high school and enrolled to study political science at university. Boyd hints that Dr. Kriengsak was involved in student activism. In 1973, he received a government scholarship to study in Australia. Boyd's book contains Dr. Kriengsak's biography and describes the early years of the Hope of Bangkok Church. The book presents Dr. Kriengsak in very favorable light, all criticism is seen as non-essential. In the Thailand Christian Directory 1997 Mr. Phitsanunart is mentioned as the pastor. Thailand Christian Directory 1997, 240. See also HERD #473.

²⁰¹ Hope of Seattle Homepage. Online URL:<http://www.hopeofseattle.com/aboutus.html> June 15, 2000. Thailand Christian Directory 1997, 240. New Apostolic Churches, 11.

²⁰²*Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep* 1986. Questionnaire 1990. Ruohomäki 1988, 141. Henry Breidenthal, interview April 7, 1999. Tape. Boyd, 130-140. Boyd reports in detail the process of buying

When the Hope of Bangkok Church was founded the first reactions were widely favorable, especially among missionaries belonging to the member organizations of the EFT. Several missionaries of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and some Pentecostal missionaries initially joined the Hope of Bangkok Church. According to Dr. Henry Breidenthal of the OMF, the missionaries formed half of the congregation in the first worship service. The missionaries who joined the Hope of Bangkok Church were not assigned to full-time church planting ministry by their mission organization, and joined the Hope of Bangkok on a voluntary basis. However, tension between the Hope of Bangkok Church and the rest of the Protestant community was growing, and the initial group of missionaries withdrew after a couple of years.²⁰³

Growth of the church has been rapid. The figures in Table 20 are based on information given by the church on different occasions. They are estimates and what was said about the membership of the Romkloa Church is valid for the Hope of Bangkok Church as well. The figures here are apparently given for the number of believers, not for the baptized membership. In the early years there were stringent pre-membership interviews. Around 1986 or 1987 it became important to raise the membership statistics. The combined attendance of all the worship services became reported. Several services were organized every Sunday, and members often attended more than one service.²⁰⁴

In 1999, the Hope of Bangkok Church refused to give any information on its membership and activities. Its Internet homepages, in English, were closed. Later, new homepages using Thai have been opened. In the homepages of the international Hope Churches some information on the membership of the Hope of Bangkok Church have been maintained. It is informed that there are “over six thousand members in Bangkok with over 700 churches throughout Thailand”. The World Churches Handbook gave the membership as 3930 and the community as 7700 in 1995.²⁰⁵

the premises from an auction.

²⁰³The missionaries who joined the Hope of Bangkok Church included Alan and Maelynn Ellard, Henry Breidenthal and Mary Cook from Overseas Missionary Fellowship, Irene Hoft from Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade and Liz Sorensen from the Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission. Ken and Carol Webb and Barry and Rowena McKnight were mentioned to be associated with the Hope of Bangkok Church in 1987. East Asia Millions, London., April/May 1984, 36. England 1987, 10. Vaurula- Ontermäa 1988, 267. Henry Breidenthal, interview April 7, 1999. Henry Briedenthal, Mo Henry, was the Director of the Bangkok Bible College, and was involved with the Suan Phlu New Life Church. At that time the New Life Churches were cautious in the roles of missionaries and Mo Henry asked permission to join the ministry of the Hope of Bangkok Church. After a while he began to feel uneasy with the developments in the Hope of Bangkok Church. After furlough he started to distance himself from the Hope of Bangkok Church and returned to the New Life Churches. Ms. Mary Cooke, another OMF missionary was with the Hope of Bangkok Church from 1981 to 1984. Mary Cooke to Jaakko Mäkelä, February 25, 1999. In the beginning the missionaries felt that they were welcomed and were needed at the Hope of Bangkok Church.

²⁰⁴England 1987, 8. Ruohomäki 1988, 141. Questionnaire 1990. Edwin Zehner according to HERD #475. Zehner was involved in the Hope Bangkok Church from 1985 to 1988. See also HERD #472.

²⁰⁵Hope of Seattle Homepage. It is not informed from which year this information is received. The

Table 20. Development of the membership of the Hope of Bangkok Church

1981	17
1983	200
1984	400
1985	800
1987	1800
1988	4500
1990	6000
1999	6000

Sources: England 1987,8. Ruohomäki 1988, 141, Kriangsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 26,27. Questionnaire 1990. Hope of Seattle Homepage, 2000.

The figure for 1999 has been received from the Hope of Seattle Homepage. It is not known for which year these statistics are given. Neither is it known whether these include only the baptized membership, or the entire community.

In 1989, a change in the organization of the Hope of Bangkok Church took place. New places of worship were opened in the outskirts of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. These were not called churches, but worship places (*sathan namaskarn*). The Hope of Bangkok Church thus comprises of the Central worship place, three other worship places in the suburbs, the international worship, and the daughter churches.²⁰⁶

The rapid growth and working methods have created mixed feelings. The church has been suspected of proselytizing among the members of other churches. Around 1990 the reputation of the church was better abroad than it was in Thailand. The church was co-operating with organizations associated with the Lausanne Movement, the Charismatic Fellowship of Asia, the International Charismatic Consultation for World Evangelization, and the AD 2000 Movement. In the 1990s the Hope of Bangkok Church was frequently linked with other fast-growing churches as an example of admirable growth.²⁰⁷

Because of the problems in expansion, the membership of the Hope of Bangkok Church in the EFT was suspended temporarily in January 1987. This is the first time that the EFT has made this kind of decision. In 1989, the membership of the Hope of Bangkok Church in the EFT was reconsidered. The disciplinary actions were upheld,

World Churches Handbook 1997, 813, gives following information : Community in 1990 5,240; in 1995 7,700; in 2000 10,200. Membership in 1990 2,720; in 1995 3,930; in 2000 5,140.

²⁰⁶Naenam Khrishchak Khwamwang Krungthep. 1989. (Introducing the Hope of Bangkok Church).

²⁰⁷Questionnaire 1990. According to a press release Dr.Kriangsak was invited to be a speaker in a conference in Singapore February 1988, arranged by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization as a preparation for its second Congress in Manila. A further example of the reputation of the church is the articles cited in the previous notes. England mentions the critic, but considers it unsubstantial. Dr. C. Peter Wagner includes the Hope of Bangkok in the churches he calls New apostolic churches. New Apostolic Churches 1998, 11.

but a recommendation with five points was made to achieve co-operation.²⁰⁸

During the early years, the Hope of Bangkok Church actively drew members from other churches, at times rather systematically. Those who joined were given different duties at the Hope of Bangkok Church. Members of other churches were invited to visit, and those who did, were encouraged to stay and continue the extensive informing about the church to other Christians.²⁰⁹

The second aspect of the controversy was the establishment of daughter churches in the other provinces. Four daughter churches had been established by 1986. In 1990, the number of the daughter churches was informed to be 72. The church is trying to fulfil Dr. Kriengsak's vision from the year 1976 to establish daughter churches in each of the 685 *amphoes* (districts) of the 72 provinces by the year 2000.²¹⁰

The actual plan to expand was not made in consultation with other churches. This created the strongest protests. Written protests were made in 1986. The CCT reacted on Dr. Kriengsak's actions in CCT's District 3 in Lampang and District 15 in Phayao (in Northern Thailand). As a result some congregations were divided. Another protest, an EFT internal matter, came from the Full Gospel Church Foundation. Its Surathani Church (in Southern Thailand) was divided because of the actions of the Hope of Bangkok Church.²¹¹

Even persons sympathetic toward the Hope of Bangkok Church admit that the church has expanded by taking over churches belonging to other groups. The list of the daughter churches reveals that most of the daughter churches of the Hope of Bangkok Church are located in the provincial towns, or in districts where there already was a church. In some cases entire local churches were transferred to the Hope of Bangkok Church; in some cases members of existing churches have joined the Hope of Bangkok Church to establish new daughter churches of the Hope of Bangkok

²⁰⁸Charan Ratanabutra, Letter to the leaders of EFT member organizations, January 28, 1987. (In Thai). Charan Ratanabutra to Kriengsak Charoenwongsak, April 20, 1989. Translation from Thai, signed by Dr. Charan. Photocopy in author's collection. I have received this photocopy as well as other copies of correspondence concerning the Hope of Bangkok Church through my personal contacts. It has not been possible to consult the originals in the EFT office. Without doubt the copies are of the originals used in the EFT administration.

²⁰⁹Invitations to join the activities of the Hope of Bangkok Church were sent frequently to other churches. See also: Vaurula- Ontermaa 1988, 267. Interview with Henry Breidenthal. Interview with Hannu Kettunen, June 1999. Tape, in Finnish.

²¹⁰*Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep*, 1986.

²¹¹These protests created much interest and became public knowledge. Dr. Kriengsak or his associates had visited congregations in the Districts of the CCT without prior approval from the District offices. The protest letters are copied in a summary of reports and correspondence concerning the Hope of Bangkok Church prepared by the EFT in July 1989. 11 pages. In Thai and English. Photocopy in author's collection.

Church.²¹²

According to the information given by the Hope of Bangkok Church in 1990, three percent of the members were Christians before joining the Hope of Bangkok Church. If this three per cent is calculated from the announced membership of 6000 in 1990, it means 180 persons. A report written in 1987 stated that seventy percent of the people attending a worship service were "new Christians". This means that thirty per cent of the people attending the worship service had been Christians for some time. This indicates that the given three per cent for the transfers of membership in 1990 might be too low.²¹³

Apparently, in the end of the 1980s, most of the growth in Bangkok was caused by conversion. It was customary in the worship services to make a call for those who want to "receive faith" to come forward. In 1987, up to a hundred professions of faith were recorded weekly.²¹⁴

The Hope of Bangkok Church has not been readmitted to the EFT. The obvious reason has been its unwillingness to comply with the conditions set by the EFT. The conditions as such should not have been too difficult to fulfil. Because it is outside the registered Protestant bodies, the legal status of the Hope of Bangkok Church is nowadays based on being a foundation. The foundation is called the Hope of the Thai People Foundation (*Muniti khwamwang khong chao Thai*). As a foundation, it is questionable whether it is officially permitted to use the name *khrischak* in its Thai correspondence. The official name of its central worship place has been changed to Hope Place; this name is also used in Thai. In English information, the name Hope of Bangkok Church is still used. The name Hope of God, Bangkok is also used.²¹⁵

In early 1999, a new controversy involving the Hope of Bangkok Church became

²¹²List of the names and addresses of the daughter churches are printed in *Naenam Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep* 1989. On evaluation of the actions of the Hope of Bangkok Church: E.g Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 270-273, based on Verner Raassina's evaluation. Interview with Henry Breidenthal, 7.4.1999. Interview with Hannu Kettunen, June 1999. An example of the transfers of whole local churches: The Finnish Free Foreign Mission (Full Gospel Churches in Thailand) lost the whole work in Loei Province to the Hope of Bangkok Church. The transfer was negotiated with the local Finnish missionary in Loei, not with the mission. Initiative was most likely made by the missionary. Many other local churches were split, e.g. Phitsanuloke, Lampang, Chiang Rai. See interview with Hannu Kettunen June 1999. Example on members of existing churches joining the Hope of Bangkok Church in establishing new daughter church: In Ubon Ratchathani some members of the Gospel Church left their church and joined the new daughter church of the Hope of Bangkok Church.

²¹³Questionnaire 1990. England 1987, 8. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 26, 29.

²¹⁴England 1987, 8. In Sept. 11, 1988, it was announced that 23 persons had joined the church the previous week. Observations Sept. 11, 1988.

²¹⁵Hope of God homepages. Online [URL:http://www.hopeofgod.org/](http://www.hopeofgod.org/) . July 2000. Bangkok Post, January 21, 1999. Hope of Bangkok Church information flier, July 11.1999.

public. It began from complaints of the parents of a young man who had joined the Hope of Bangkok Church. The incident was published in the newspapers, and Parliamentary Religious Affairs Committee launched an investigation on alleged irregularities in the registration of the Hope of the Thai People Foundation.²¹⁶

By June 1999 the latest controversy had not led to any official actions. Some of the information has been confusing. One result was that the Hope Place changed its publicity patterns. Earlier the church was willing to tell about its ministry and the growth of the membership was eagerly publicized. In the early part of 1999, the Internet homepages in English were closed. The publication of membership figures was however continued on the homepages of the international daughter churches. New homepages in Thai have been opened. These contain pictures of members of the Royal Family granting audiences to the leaders of the Hope of Thai People Foundation or presiding over ceremonies at the Hope Place. Displaying loyalty to the Royal Family has been a traditional way to dispel accusations of subversive actions.²¹⁷

The Hope of Bangkok Church has prepared a Statement of Faith containing 12 articles. The same Statement is also presented as the Statement of the entire Hope of God movement. It was prepared during the early years of the ministry of the Hope of Bangkok Church. According to the Statement, the Hope of Bangkok Church can be seen as a traditional Pentecostal church. The Trinitarian doctrine is affirmed in the articles on God. It is however possible that the Statement is no longer valid in all of the articles. In the article on the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues was mentioned as the initial sign of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is possible that the strict interpretation of the “initial evidence” is no longer followed.²¹⁸

²¹⁶Thai Rat. January 27, 1999, 17. (In Thai). Bangkok Post. January 21, 1999, 2. Bangkok Post claimed that the Hope of Bangkok Church had 80,000 members in 170 branches. The number of branches is close to the real, but the membership must be an error. According to newspaper reports, Dr. Kriengsak denied being the founder of the Hope of Thai People Foundation. He announced to have only been invited as a guest speaker. He had not received money nor presents from the Foundation. According to him, the accusation against the Foundation were groundless. Bangkok Post January 25th, 1999, 4.

²¹⁷Hope of God homepages. It is not clear how the connections to the Royal Family were established. Rubina Kraivixien, a daughter of the former Prime Minister Thanin Kraivixien, is a member of the Hope of Bangkok Church. Ms. Rubina is reportedly the secretary of the Foundation See: Bangkok Post. January 21, 1999, 2. The demonstrators in 1973, 1976 and 1992 were carrying portraits of the King and the Queen. In April- June 1999 I contacted the office of the Hope of Bangkok Church for an interview with Mr. Phitsanunart. Previous December I had met with Dr. Kriengsak, and since he was not anymore the official leader, he advised me to make an appointment with Mr. Phitsanunart as well. In April an appointment with Mr. Phitsanunart was made through the church office. The date of the appointment Mr. Phitsanunart called, and told that after reading my questionnaire he was not able to give me any information. In a situation when the church was examined he was not willing to give any information even for research purposes. I was welcomed to attend the worship service, but not to interview the leadership of the church.

²¹⁸Thai version which should be held as the original in Hope of Bangkok Church 1989, 5-7. English version Online [URL:http://www.hopeofseattle.com/whatwe.htm](http://www.hopeofseattle.com/whatwe.htm). June 2000. Faupel identifies five doctrinal themes in the early Pentecostal message: “1) justification by faith in Christ; 2) sanctification

The Hope of Bangkok Church should be seen as an example of the search for culturally relevant, contextualized strategies for expansion and leadership roles. This search has been pragmatic, the reasons given for the new forms are sociological rather than theological. The basic idea is that the church must become large. Dr. Kriengsak summarizes this idea:

"Thais by nature enjoy big, exiting, festival events. They call this *sanuk*, which means "fun". In this culture, a church must be perceived as being big enough to warrant their interest. A big urban church is necessary to work in Bangkok successfully. We need to make the church visible so that it can attract people's interest and confidence".²¹⁹

The search for new forms has led to a radical rearrangement in the organization of the church compared to the patterns that have traditionally occurred in churches in Thailand. Until the mid-1990s, the administration of the Hope of Bangkok Church was centralized, and the power to control the church was concentrated in the hands of the senior pastor, Dr. Kriengsak. The church was led by the pastoral team (*khana phunam khrischak*, literally the committee of the leaders of the church). The senior pastor, also the chairman of the team, appointed the first pastoral team. After that, the team has appointed new members itself. The term of service was for life. The final decisions concerning the goals or other important matters were made by the pastoral team, not by the General meeting of the church. It is not known whether the change in leadership has led to any organizational changes.²²⁰

In Thailand, the Hope of Bangkok Church has been accused of being authoritarian. According to these accusations, the leaders cannot be criticized. Apparently, these accusations are not totally groundless. In the philosophy of the ministry of the Hope of Bangkok, discipline, unity and submitting to authority are emphasized.²²¹

as a second definite work of grace; 3) healing the body through the atoning work of Christ; 4) the premillennial return of Christ; and 5) the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in unknown tongues." Faupel, 28. See also Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Spiritus ubi vult spirat. Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989). Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 42. Luther – Agricola – Society, Helsinki. 1998, 49-54. Dr Kriengsak mentioned to me that the Hope of Bangkok Church differs from the traditional Pentecostals in the point that they do not endorse the teaching of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Meeting with Dr. Kriengsak December 14, 1998.

²¹⁹Kriengsak Charoenwongsak, Hope of Bangkok. A Visionary Model of Church Growth and Church Planting. Urban Mission. Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Vol.7. Number 3. January 1990, 27-28.

²²⁰Questionnaire, 1990.

²²¹The Hope of God Church. Philosophy of the ministry. Internet homepage reprint, 1999. In July 11, 1999 I attended the afternoon (4 am) service at the Hope of Bangkok Church. One of the assistant pastors delivered the sermon. The content of the sermon was about submitting to authority of the leader. In the end of the sermon the members attending the service were asked to seek their (cell group?) leaders and apologize if they had not given the honor due to them. Most of the people present formed groups, obviously according to the cell groups. The beginning of the service resembled a rock

3.6. INDEPENDENT CHURCHES AND THAI SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The purpose of this section is to analyze the adaptation of the Protestant community, and especially the independent churches, to the legal system and social structures of the country. It will be described how the social conditions have shaped the churches and their organizational patterns.

3.6.1. Laws and Government policies shaping the Christian community

The Constitution of Thailand grants freedom of religion to its citizens. However, the state apparatus controls the religious life. The Department for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education was set to control the Buddhist *Sangha*, but matters concerning Christianity are also under this Department. The Department for Religious Affairs grants recognition to religious organizations. The Church of Christ in Thailand and the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand have been certified as the major Protestant organizations, and the Baptist Church Foundation and the Foundation of Seventh-Day Adventists of Thailand as minor organizations. In 1982, it was informed that the Department for Religious Affairs would not directly certify any new religious organizations.²²²

The policies of the Department for Religious Affairs have forced the mission agencies entering the country after 1970 to seek membership in the EFT, if they wish to continue their own independent work. It is highly unlikely that the foreign member organizations of the EFT, listed in Appendix 3, would in a different situation seek membership in the same organization.

The policy to restrict the number of missionaries began in 1972 by issuing work permits only to missionaries belonging to the organizations recognized by the Department for Religious Affairs. The peak in the policy of restriction was reached around 1982. It was informed that the mission agencies must start to reduce the number of missionaries. It was also informed that the Department would not permit new foreign organizations to register with the EFT. However, the policy to reduce the number of missionaries was not put into effect.²²³

concert. The members were invited to come close to choir stand and to dance according to music played by the music group of the church.

²²²Seri Phongphit 1988, 6,7. Update Christian Directory 1986-1987, 2. *Raigan karn upatham sasana uen. Sasana Khrist*. 2525 (1982) 1-3, 99. In 1984, the EFT distributed a collection of the policy statements of the Department of Religious Affairs and other documents of the government agencies concerning Christianity. Documents for Meeting of the Foreign Member Organization of the EFT. November 22-23, 1984. Most of the documents are in Thai.

²²³J. Ruohomäki 1988, 155-158. The member organizations were discouraged by the EFT to directly contact the Department for Religious Affairs. Information on the policies of the Department has been given through the EFT.

The religious organizations can not be lawful owners of property. Only foundations certified by the Ministry of Interior can hold land deeds. The foundations are not only the owners of property, but can carry on their own separate functions. This has further contributed to the separation between the local churches and institutions. This system also opens a possibility for a national organization to function without being a member of the major organizations recognized by the Department for Religious Affairs. The Hope of Bangkok Church has been using this opportunity in arranging the legal basis for its ministry.

3.6.2. Strategies for expansion

Three types of strategies of expansion of the church can be found within the Protestant community especially in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The traditional strategy, employed before the Second World War, is still followed at least by the CCT. Since 1970, two new types of strategies, here called the neighborhood approach strategy and the cell group church strategy, have been developed by mission agencies and their partner churches and by the independent churches. The latter could be called the central church strategy as well.²²⁴

The traditional strategy was to establish preaching places of which at least some were developed into fully organized local churches. At the same time strong emphasis was placed on developing schools and other institutions. The CCT still follows this strategy, having a relatively small number of well-established congregations. The process of establishing new congregations has been slow. The main concern has been to strengthen the existing body, not to break new ground. This kind of strategy is not necessarily a defined one, but it merely reflects an attempt to maintain the status quo of the church.²²⁵

The process of creating new strategies can be seen as an adaptation to the social organization of the Thai society in general and to the situation in Bangkok in particular. The contemporary discussion in Thailand concerning the church in the urban centers in Thailand is mostly influenced by the examples of the Hope of Bangkok Church and the Romklao Church, and discussion going on within the Lausanne Movement.²²⁶

²²⁴Wells 1957, 29-40, 129-134. Smith 1982, 94-98. In Korea, from where the cell group church – strategy was brought to Thailand, the churches employing this strategy have been called central churches. (See chapter 3.5) In 1993 I therefore used the term central church strategy.

²²⁵1979-1982 Policy Statement of the Church of Christ in Thailand. CCT Office. Mimeograph.

²²⁶C. Peter Wagner, Frontiers in Missionary Strategy, Moody Press Chigaco. 1971, 181-197. Raymond Bakke, Urban Evangelization: A Lausanne Strategy since 1980, International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Vol.8, No 4. October 1984, 152-153. Typologies for urban churches, based mostly on social factors of the American urban communities are proposed. Peter Wagner proposed five types: Cathedral,

The neighborhood approach strategy and the cell group church strategy emphasize evangelization and seek contextualized patterns suitable for expansion. However, this mutual desire has led to two very different organizational patterns. Both of these can be seen as adaptations to the social organization of the Thai society, summarized by Suntaree Komin:

"The Thai social system is first and foremost a hierarchically structured society where individualism and interpersonal relationships are of utmost importance".

"Thai people have a very big ego, a deep sense of independence, pride and dignity. They can not tolerate any violation of the "ego" self. Despite the cool and calm front, they can be easily provoked to strong emotional reactions, if the "self" ... is insulted."²²⁷

The neighborhood approach

The neighborhood approach is used here for strategies that consider an expanding network of self-supporting local churches as their aim. The neighborhood approach is practical and function-oriented. The main concern is in the search for patterns suitable for expansion. This in turn calls for a search for contextualized leadership roles.²²⁸ The neighborhood approach presupposes the existence of a denominational organization forming the framework for the local groups but very little is said about its nature or role.

There are two kinds of modifications of the neighborhood approach strategy. The mission agencies and their national partner churches have developed their new strategies. The first was the Bangkok Urban Strategy, developed by the Thailand Baptist Mission in the end of the 1970s. Basically, these strategies call for the establishment of evangelistic teams to concentrate on local neighborhoods in order to establish local churches. Ideally, the teams consist of some full-time workers and trained volunteers. The practical applications vary, but the general goal is to establish "indefinitely reproducing churches".²²⁹

store front church, suburban or outer-city church, house church, and ethnic church. Raymond Bakke has proposed a more detailed typology of seventeen types. In 1986, the Church Committee for Bangkok Evangelization arranged a seminar where Dr Raymond Bakke, a Lausanne Associate, was the main speaker

²²⁷Suntaree Komin 1991, 132-133.

²²⁸Bangkok Urban Strategy. 1980, 28. Critical comments for terms used for leadership in the Thai Bible see: Jerry Perril, A Study of Some of the Words Used to Describe the Concept of "Leadership" in the NT. 1980. Mimeograph. The Bangkok Urban Strategy discusses at some length about the four principles about a Church which has "recaptured its task of outreach, reconsidered its emergence within its own culture, rediscovered the New Testament patterns of leadership, and restructured its living so that every Christian is part of the harvest".

²²⁹Bangkok Urban Strategy. 1980, 5, 9-16, 29-32. Hill 1982, 52-61, 98. Later at least the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the Lutheran Mission in Thailand and the Christian and Missionary Alliance have

The New Life Churches have developed an indigeneous strategy to expand by division. They have been dividing their congregations as soon as it has been possible. The way to expand by dividing was developed because the premises became overcrowded and there were several possible leaders within the group. Simultaneously there was a desire to evangelize and expand. The New Life Churches attempt to maintain a family-like structure of the church, while simultaneously seeking a wider fellowship between the local churches. They try to keep the balance between the autonomy of a local church and establishing a denomination. The structure of the New Life Churches has been influenced by the behavioral patterns of the Thais to be independent. The small size of the churches leaves space for the individualism, especially for the leaders of the churches. The New Life Churches have contributed to the discussion on new strategies by making the expansion by division a respectable pattern. Earlier division was usually seen to only weaken the church.

The cell group church (central church)

The development of the cell group church (central church) strategy in Thailand has been influenced by the Korean central churches. The churches in which this principle has been applied include the Jai Samarn Church of the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand, the Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church, both independent, and to some extent, the Romyen Church of the Thailand Assemblies of God. Cell groups are used in other churches as well, but it is characteristic to these churches.²³⁰

In the cell group church strategy, a strong mother church establishes cell groups in different parts of the city. All groups come together in the worship service in the central church. In addition to expanding the cell groups to cover the whole city, the two major cell group churches, Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church, have opened a network of daughter churches in the other provinces. Only the churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area have been able to expand their daughter churches to every region of the country.²³¹

The success of the cell group churches in Thailand can be seen in the context of the patron-client relationship. A person becoming a Christian in a social setting, where conversion to Christianity is seen in negative light, becomes very vulnerable socially. The pastor, in a matter of fact, becomes the patron of the new Christians: the more members joining his church, the stronger its attraction. Most systematically this patron

been developing their own strategies which have similarities with the strategy of the Baptists. Five years Plan of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand, 1980-1985, 1986-1990. Bangkok Church Planting Project 1987-1997. Christian and Missionary Alliance.

²³⁰Wan Phetchsongkram, interview 13.5.1987. Hill 1982, 100.

²³¹Hurston & Hurston 1978, 23-24. *Anuson khrob rob 4 pee*, 1983, 9-10, 14,18. *Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep*, 1986, 7.

role of the pastor has been developed in the Hope of Bangkok Church.²³²

The second pattern of social organization of the society to influence the cell group churches is the tendency to develop hierarchical and pyramidal structures. The tendency to form these structures can be observed generally in the Thai society. The pyramidal structures are developed furthest in the Hope of Bangkok Church.²³³

The cell group churches have been functioning only for a short period of time. An important question is what will happen to the churches when the founders retire. In the Hope of Bangkok Church the change of leadership has already taken place. The new leader is the brother-in-law of the founder. The social organization of the society and the behavioral patterns of Thai people seem to leave open two possibilities: either one of the assistants becomes a new charismatic leader, or the church will disintegrate.

Most of the independent churches have established daughter churches in other provinces. This reflects the position of Bangkok as the primary city in the country. For the Hope of Bangkok Church and the Romklao Church, establishing daughter churches in other provinces is part of the premeditated strategy. The others may just have followed up the contacts of the members.²³⁴

3.6.3. Additional considerations: transfer members, ethnicity, and the role of women.

The transfer of members has been a sensitive issue in the Protestant community because some churches have felt that they have been victims of "sheep stealing". It is difficult to obtain reliable statistics on the transfers. In the questionnaire in 1987, only a few of the independent churches informed the number of transfer members. The accuracy of the membership statistics varies. Some people may be registered in two places, in the old congregation and the new one. The registers on baptisms may include persons who have been baptized earlier. Information is incomplete, but it can be estimated that in 1987, 500 to 600 of the 3480 members of the independent churches had been Christians before joining their present churches.

The mobility of the members can partly be explained by the history of the growth of the churches in Bangkok. As Smith has observed, the ethnic Thai churches in Bangkok remained static until 1955, when they started to grow as Christians from the North began to move to Bangkok to work. The new members may not have had a high level

²³²See: Kriengsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 27-28, 32. On the characteristics of the patron -client relationships: Girling 1980, 37-43.

²³³On the pyramidal and hierarchical structures in the Thai society: Morell and Chai-anan Samudavija 1982, 17-19, 22-25.

²³⁴Kriengsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 27,28. *Anuson khrop rob 4 pee*, 1983, 19. On political, administrative and cultural centralization in Bangkok: Keyes 1977, 285-299.

of commitment toward their new churches and probably easily moved from one church to another.²³⁵

Social patterns can be used to further explain the high mobility of the members of the church. People converting from Buddhism are used to the complex and fluid system of unofficial relations between the Buddhist laity and individual monks and temples. Moving from church to church following the popular preachers is something that they can relate to their earlier experiences. In addition, the patron role of the pastor for the new Christians can be a partial explanation. The patron-client relations are always reciprocal. If the patron fails in his role, or a more powerful prospective patron appears, the clients may shift their loyalty to that person.²³⁶

Two kinds of transfers should be distinguished. First, there are Christians who move to Bangkok. The actual problem is the second group of Christians who move from one church to another within the city. A special term, *khristian tour*, travelling Christian, was used in the beginning of the 1980s for Christians moving from church to church. The mobility of the members seems to be decreasing.

Ethnicity

In the early years, the Christian community in Bangkok was mostly Chinese, but is now in the process of becoming Thai. This means that Thai is used as the language of the church. This can be seen as a part of the assimilation of the Chinese in the Thai society. However, the development has led to "situational ethnicity", not necessarily to full assimilation. Almost all of the originally Chinese churches are now bilingual, using both Thai and Chinese. Most probably the great majority of their members still have a Chinese ethnic background, although the younger generation identifies more with the Thais than the Chinese.²³⁷

The growth of the church among the ethnic minorities, colloquially called hilltribes, is an interesting matter. The independent churches, however, seem to have been born among the ethnic majority, Thai and Sino-Thai. There are some independent churches with membership consisting of ethnic minorities. It is interesting that I

²³⁵See: Smith 1982, 218, 228-232.

²³⁶The members of the Buddhist laity are not required to attend a certain temple as the Christians are members of a certain local church. On movements within Buddhism: Peter A. Jackson, Buddhism, Legitimation, and Conflict. The Political Functions of Urban Thai Buddhism. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Singapore. 1989. 115-116, 177-181. Seri Phongphit 1988, 6-19.

²³⁷According to Phairoj Napawan 1986, 4, only three congregations in Bangkok used only Chinese. All the independent churches included in this study used either Thai, or Thai and Chinese. In 1941, the Chinese Saphan Luang and Sathorn Churches had 235 and 146 members respectively. This was more than the combined membership of all the Thai churches. Wells, 1957. Smith 1982, 211. On the assimilation see e.g. Keyes 1977, 303, 311-313.

have not been able to identify a Karen independent church. The Karen churches, mostly Baptist, are the largest of the minority churches. (See the introduction to the Chapter 3.)

The Role of Women

There has traditionally been a very clear division of labor along gender lines in the Thai society. It can be presented as follows:

Men: Politics, religion, education, fishing/agriculture

Women: Commerce, kinship, community, land

Usually the head of the household is a man; however, it can be argued that while men are considered as the *de jure* household heads, women often are the *de facto* household heads. Men formally represent the household to the outside world, while women control the domestic economy.²³⁸

The observations on the division of labor are made in rural communities. The social structure in urban communities is different. The differences are caused by urbanization but also the ethnic background is different. The urban population is largely Sino-Thai (See Chapter 2.1).

Almost all of the leaders of the independent churches are men. I have not found any women among the present leaders of the independent churches. However, women have had and have important roles in the leadership of the independent churches. At least three different aspects can be mentioned.

First, the husband and wife form a team. The wives of the pastors of the independent churches are not only home-makers; they have active roles in the leadership of the churches. Their role may not be formally defined, but both husband and wife are almost always presented as a team in the publications of the churches. The active role of both the husband and wife is pronounced in the Muang Thai Church (Chapter 3.4). In Romklao Church as well as in the Hope Bangkok Church both spouses are involved in the ministry of the church. (Chapter 3.5)²³⁹

In the early independent churches, wives apparently provided the economical foundation for the ministry of the husband. For example, Muan Kittisarn and Thammada Phongsnoi ran private schools. (Chapter 3.2.)

²³⁸Olli-Pekka Ruohomäki has studied the Thai Muslim villages in Southern Thailand. The same structure are found also in Thai Buddhist communities. The ethnic Chinese communities are in this respect different. "Although women have always held power in financial matters, the fact that money has become much more important in everyday life has further intensified female participation in the cash economy." O.-P. Ruohomäki 1999, 62-73, 89, 96, 133. Quote page 62. On studies on the Thai Buddhist communities see e.g. research made on Bang Chan near Bangkok . (See chapter 2.1.)

²³⁹ For Hope of Bangkok Church: Boyd 86-87, 106.

Secondly, there are independent churches that actually have been established by women. The beginnings of the Gospel Church of Kantang in Trang, and Phonprasart Church in Suphanburi (Chapter 3.3.), as well as Samchuk Church in Suphaburi (3.2) are clearly recorded. Later, at least the formal leadership has been passed to male pastors, but the crucial role of women in establishing the churches is acknowledged.

Thirdly, female kinship seems to be important in passing the leadership. Since most of the independent churches have been functioning only for a couple of years, the founders are usually still in charge. However, in the few occasions when the leadership has been passed to the younger generation, the female kinship can be observed. In the Bangkok Church (Chapter 3.2) the leadership was first transferred from Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn to his son-in-law Dr. Charan Ratanabutra, and from him to Dr. Direk Arayakosol, married to the younger sister of Dr. Charan's wife. In the Hope of Bangkok Church, Mr. Phitsanunart Sritawong, married to Dr. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak's younger sister, has become the leader (Chapter 3.5).

3.6.4. Parallel developments within the Thai Buddhism

A parallel development of setting up independent organizations can be observed within the Thai Buddhism. Traditionally the local temples have been rather independent in arranging their activities. Peter A. Jackson states that Buddhism in Thailand is structured not only by the official state imposed system of the *Sangha* administration, but also patterned by a complex and fluid system of unofficial relations between the Buddhist laity and individual monks and temples. The emergence of the new movements has created some tension within the Buddhist *Sangha* and also in the society in general.²⁴⁰

Dhammakaya is the most visible modern representative of concentration meditation. It was understood to operate with the traditional Buddhist concepts, teaching rebirth, heaven, and hell as temporary states between births and *niphan* (*nirvana* in Sanskrit). However, its interpretation of *niphan* has later been accused of being heretic. Dhammakaya also contains mystical beliefs. The intense practice of concentration meditation can often cause visions and other psychic experiences, which traditionally are identified as deriving from contacts with supernatural beings. Dhammakaya has appealed to the upper levels of the society, especially to university students and graduates. In 1998 the Dhammakaya movement became publicly criticized for its teachings and practices. It was publicized that the Dhammakaya teaches *niphan* as a permanent, ever-blissful realm. It was also reported that Dhammakaya teaches that merit can be obtained by buying sacred objects from the temple. The Sangha Council launched an investigation on its activities and teachings, but no decisive actions were taken.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Jackson 1989, 115-116, 177-181.

²⁴¹ Seri Phongphit 1988, 11-13. Jackson 1989, 199-219. Bangkok Post, February 28, 1989, 36. On the
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Both Suan Mokh, established by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and Santi Asoke represent reformist Buddhism. They stress that *niphan* is a state of mind and that heaven is here and now, they also deny rebirth. Both draw most of their support from people not part of the power structure. Buddhadasa was influenced by Zen and Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity. He has not built a large organization, but has influenced several thinkers, for example Phra Rajavaramuni and Sulak Sivaraksa, a writer and social critic.²⁴²

In 1975, Phra Bodhirak, a monk ordained some years before, declared himself together with all his followers, monks and laity, independent of the officially recognized *Sangha*. They established the Santi Asoke Center in suburban Bangkok. The characteristics of this group are the strictness in observing the precepts and vegetarianism. The laity live a simple life. Members of the group take actively part in politics. In May 1989, the highest administrative council of the *Sangha* decided to disrobe Phra Bodhirak and monks ordained by him. Santi Asoke has continued to exist, but the Santi Asoke monks are not allowed to use the yellow robes of the mainstream Buddhist monks, and the Santi Asoke people use different terminology than mainstream Buddhism.²⁴³

1998 controversy: Bangkok Post December 1, 1998, 1. December 3, 11. December 21, Outlook 1, 4. March 25, 1999, 13.

²⁴²Seri Phongphit 1988, 8-11. Jackson 1989, 125-135. Maen Pongudom, Apologetic and Missionary Proclamation: Exemplified by American Presbyterian Missionaries to Thailand (1828-1979), Early Church Apologists: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a Thai Buddhist Monk Apologist. University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. 1979, 325-375. (An unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis). Maen Pongudom compares Buddhadasa with the early Christian apologists. Also Buddhadasa carries on his apologetical missionary proclamation with an eclectic method.

²⁴³ Heikkilä-Horn 1996, 37-67. Seri Phongphit 1988, 13-15. Jackson 1989, 159-176. Bangkok Post, May 30, 1989, 1.

4. THEOLOGY OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze the historical and contemporary theological context of the independent churches in Thailand. Understandings of the independent churches of doctrines, especially about the church, its membership, and the ministry of the church will be described, analyzed and classified. It will be demonstrated how the independent churches have developed the theological thoughts, and how these understandings have affected the churches. Finally, some comparisons are made. The purpose of comparison is to demonstrate how the theological thinking of the independent churches can be related to contemporary theological trends and historical theological traditions.

The sources for this chapter are the constitutions and doctrinal statements of the independent churches, usually called Statements of Faith. The doctrinal statements are called *lak kho chuea* in Thai, in accordance with the Constitution of the EFT. The same term is also used for the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. This is most likely an influence of the non-creedal tradition in the American Evangelicalism¹. The writings of the leaders of the independent churches are also used as primary sources. Other sources are archive material from the period after the Second World War, as well as information collected by questionnaires. This material is used to determine the ideas common to the independent churches in this study. A classification will be made when different understandings are found. A special interest is paid to the thoughts of Rev. Wan Phetchsongkram.

It seems that only the urban churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area find interest in the written Statements of Faith. Written statements are available from most of the Bangkok churches, but only one of the rural churches enclosed its Statement of Faith in the 1999 survey; churches announcing in 1999 that they do not have a written statement are with one exception outside Bangkok. Churches without their own statements refer to the EFT Statement of Faith².

¹On the non-creedal tradition in American Evangelicalism: Pinola 1995, 26-29 (Disciples of Christ). Donald F. Durnbaugh, The believers Church. The History and Character of Radical Protestantism. Herald Press. Scottdale Pennsylvania, Second edition. 1985 6,7. ("Free churches")

²In the regulations for receiving new members of the EFT, it is stated that the applicant church must submit its Statement of Faith. Some churches, like the Bangkok Church and the Church of God, specially informed that they refer to the Statement of the EFT. (Table 12.) Many of the Statements do not mention the date when they have been adopted. The years without brackets refer to the year the statement has been adopted. The years 1987 and 1999 in the brackets indicate that the date of adopting the statement is not known, but it was received in the surveys in 1987 and 1999. The following is a list of churches, which have sent their Constitutions or Statements of Faith.

Evangelical Free Churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area: (Table 13.) Thonburi Baptist Church 1978, Grace Baptist Church (1999), Bangkok Fellowship Church (1987), Krung Thai Church (1999), Salvation Church (1987), Sangsan Church (1999).

The New Life Churches: (Table 17.) Makkasan Church (1999), Dao Khanong Church (1987),

A critical comment should be made on the sources. The constitutions are rather unreliable when the purpose is to study how the churches actually function. It seems that the functions described in the constitutions and the ways in which the churches really function do not necessarily correspond. The constitutions are slightly more reliable when the purpose is to study how the church, membership in the church, and the ministry of the church are understood. A similar feature can be found in the Thai society in general. The written laws and regulations and their applications are not always similar.³

Sathupradit Church (1987, 1999), Bangkhuntian Church (1987, 1999), Bangchak Church (1999).

Emerging denominations: Muang Thai Churches 1984, 1994, Romklao Church 1983, 1999, the Hope of Bangkok Church 1986.

The only provincial church that enclosed its Statement of Faith was the Pornprasart Church in Suphanburi (1999). (Table 15.) In addition, the Sanlao Church in Nan and the Khao Dee Church in Chiang Rai announced that they have their own Statements of Faith. Sahathai Takua Pa Church informed that they use the Lutheran Book of Concord as their confessional basis. Nine of the provincial churches informed that they do not have their own Statement of Faith.

³On laws and how the laws are applied: Riggs 1967, 6-12.

4.1. DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN THAILAND

The development of theological thought in Thailand can be divided into three periods. During the first period, from the beginning of the Protestant work until 1938, the American Presbyterian tradition dominated the Protestant community. However, the American Presbyterian Mission failed to develop viable theological approach for the national church. When the Church of Christ in Thailand was organized in 1934, it still lacked theological tools. Several authors, writing from slightly different theological perspectives, refer to the weakness of the CCT.⁴

During the second period, from 1938 to the late 1970s or early 1980s, the Thai churches and Christians tried to cope with sometimes forceful outside influences. The campaigns of John Sung were the first direct challenge to the dominant theological and spiritual tradition. Apparently the leadership of the CCT and church members lacked tools to constructively assess the revival. At least partly due to this, the revival led to division within the CCT. A similar division occurred after the Second World War. In the 1960s and 1970s, the theological polarization, conventionally described as a struggle between the evangelicals and the ecumenicals, affected the Thai Christian community. Mostly these developments affected the CCT, but even the Pentecostal movement in Thailand, initially a splinter from the CCT, experienced violent internal struggle caused by external influences, the actions of the United Pentecostal Church.

The third period began sometimes in the late 1970s or 1980s. Earlier, the mission organizations could be blamed for a lack of unity. Several organizations with Thai leadership emerged within the EFT since the 1980s. In this situation, the models of co-operation and the identity of the various groups had to be re-evaluated. Several simultaneous developments leading to strengthened Thai identity can be observed. (See previous chapters). By the late 1970s, the radical segment within the CCT lost some of its influence, and the evangelical segment made itself heard. This has made cooperation with other Protestant groups easier. When the EFT was founded in 1969, the mission organizations that later became members were mostly struggling to begin their ministry. By the 1980s and early 1990s, the mission-initiated groups were in the process of organizing themselves as national denominations. Simultaneously, independent churches were emerging often creating controversies. Co-operation between theological institutes became organized when the Fellowship of the Theological Institutes (*Samaphan sasanasant nai Prathet Thai*) was established in the

⁴According to Samuel Kim, the theological training in the 1960s was in the hands of the liberal segment. This segment consisted of missionaries and mostly second generation Christians who were their students. The liberal segment discouraged lower level theological training, which could have solved the lack of pastoral care. Kim 1976, 143-151. Alex Smith refers to the lack of pastoral care as the main weakness of the CCT. Mature persons were not trained to become leaders. Smith 1982, 218-221. Swanson, in reference to the situation of the 19th and early 20th centuries, writes: "The Northern Thai church was an ignorant church. It lacked access to the Bible. It lacked regular Bible study... consequently, what theological expression it had either came from mission or from pre-Christian beliefs". Swanson 1982, 92. Prasit Pongudom refers to the lack of understanding the Presbyterian theology as one reason why people easily followed John Sung. Prasit Pongudom 1984, 87.

late 1980s. Rapid expansion in urban church planting in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area was connected to a search for co-operation in evangelization.

The developments mentioned above have created an atmosphere in which it has become possible for the Christian community to study the relationship between the Christian faith and the Thai culture without being forced to merely react to outside influences. This kind of process, especially when intentional and reflected, is called contextualization. It is justified to state that serious contextual theological work has mainly been developed in Thailand since the 1980s. However, it is apparent that the theological backgrounds of the parties involved influence the outcome of contextualization. The historical aspect and the various theological traditions must be taken more seriously than they frequently have been. According to my observations, contextualization in Thailand has been dominated by the thought-patterns of American Evangelicalism. For example, knowledge of the Early Church is superficial. The churches in Thailand would greatly benefit from studies on the Early Church. As will be demonstrated, some of the controversies of the Early Church resemble the processes the Thai Christian community has gone through. The Donatian controversy (4th century) can be mentioned as an example.

4.1.1. Interests of the early Thai Christians

The historical record is largely silent in regard to the beliefs of the Thai Christians during the early years of the Protestant work. It is difficult to recover the actual theological concerns of the first generation of the Thai Christians. The existing studies and evidence suggests that their theological orientation differed from that of the missionaries. The Thai Christians remained concerned about the spirit world, *phi* and *winyan*, and how to cope with these unseen but powerful beings.⁵

In addition to the spiritual powers, the early Thai Christians were interested in the theme of the future reincarnation of Buddha, *Maitreya Buddha*, (*Phra Ariya Mettai* or *Phra Ariya Metrai* in Thai). The missionaries were ambivalent in their reactions concerning the Maitreya theme. No thorough analysis has been made. Alex Smith indicates that the missionaries were reluctant to study this theme out of fear that it could lead to raising the Buddhist writings to the same level as the Scripture. They were concerned with keeping Buddhism and the Christian message apart.

“Some missionaries capitalized on these predictions ‘pointing to the salvation wrought out by the blessed Son of God’. They used this as a starting point of contact within the Lao culture to bridge the religio-cultural gap... Most of the missionaries were cautious... It was only a point of contact, an interest-awakener. Christian missionaries avoided giving equal God-inspired credence and authority to Buddhist writings.”⁶

⁵Swanson 1984, 87.

⁶Smith 1982, 114

The questions about spiritual powers and the Maitreya Buddha continued to occupy the minds of Thai Christians later. Some of the reports found their way to the Siam Outlook, the periodical of the American Presbyterian Mission, published from 1922 to 1940. It is difficult to recover the theological concerns of the earliest Thai Christians due to the lack of written sources. More information is available of the thoughts of the Christians during the first half of the 20th century.⁷

The discussion on the Maitreya Buddha has continued until present, but in a rather subdued manner. Reasons may be manifold, but apparently the whole issue is felt to be very sensitive. The reaction of the Buddhist establishment or government officials is difficult to predict. Copies of a text found in Wat Phra Sing in Chiang Mai have been circulated in the 1990s. Some Buddhists are interested in the Maitreya Buddha as well. A book called *Phra Anakottawong*, published in 1999, contains a Thai edition of the Maitreya Buddha texts along with explanations. According to my observations, especially new Christians, who have been practicing Buddhists and converted to Christianity at a mature age, are interested in this theme. They are quite ready to see the Maitreya Buddha texts as prophecies of Jesus.⁸

The early missionaries had a world-view different not only from the Buddhists but also from the Thai Christians. Swanson has studied the world-views of the early Presbyterian missionaries in the Northern Thailand. Rev. Dr. Nantachai Mejudhon, the pastor of the Muang Thai Church, uses Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley as an example of the foreigners' difficulty in understanding the Thai culture. *Mo* Bradley, one of the most famous pioneer missionaries in Siam, died in 1873 after 38 years in Bangkok. He was the first to introduce Western medical and surgical systems and public dispensaries to Thailand. He was active also in the printing industry. However, his evangelistic ministry had very scant results. Dr. Nantachai claims that the reason for this was a lack of understanding the Thai culture. *Mo* Bradley did not study Thai culture, and this lack of understanding caused the Thais to reject the message he proclaimed.⁹

⁷Roderick Gillies, *Missionaries to their on people*. The Siam Outlook. Vol. I. No 3. January 1922, 66-67. This is a report of a trip by two colporteurs from Chiang Mai to Roi Et in the Northeast. Other similar reports can be found.

⁸Davis 1993, 118-121 refers to an article by Rev. Pracha Thaiwatcharamas about the text in Wat Phra Sing. Pekka Y. Hiltunen gives a Finnish translation of a part of the text. Pekka Yrjänä Hiltunen, Vieraassa pöydässä. Vastapäätä Buddhaa ja Kristusta. Suomen Lähetysseura. 1999, 116-117 The new Thai text was translated by Assistant Professor Bamphen Ravin. In English the text is available in: Maitreya, the future Buddha. Cambridge University Press, 1988. See: *Phra Anakottawong*. S.Dr. Nithi Iaowong, *Bannathikan (Editor). Krongkarn nangsue wichakarn nai khruua Amarin. Amarin wichakarn. Krungthep 2542*.

⁹Herbert R. Swanson, This Heathen People: The Cognitive Sources of American Missionary Westernizing Activities in Northern Siam 1867-1889. University of Maryland. 1987. An unpublished Master of Arts Thesis. Nantachai Mejudhon, Meekness: A New Approach to Christian Witness to the Thai People. Asbury Theological Seminary. 1997, 36-41. (Unpublished Doctor of Missiology dissertation) Complete account on *Mo* Bradley's ministry: Donald C. Lord 1969: Mo Bradley and

The missionaries operated from a Western world-view influenced by the Enlightenment. The supernatural has become excluded from science. Theology has been forced to find its place among sciences without relying on the supernatural. In America, the anticlerical and anti-religious philosophies surfaced later than in Europe; in the end of the 19th century, Evangelical Protestantism dominated in America. A trust of science and progress, however, based on the Scottish Common Sense philosophy, is a part of this heritage. The early Thai Christians lived with a world-view not much different from syncretistic Buddhism, as described B.J. Terwiel and others.¹⁰

Here is the possible root cause for the often-expressed observation that the Thai churches are culturally alien to their environment. The lack of understanding each other's world-views prevented the missionaries and the Thai Christians from developing a strong theological foundation for the churches. The missionaries did not understand the concerns of the early Thai Christians. For example, the question of evil spirits was addressed, but mainly from a scientific point of view. The missionaries were convinced that belief in Western medicine and science would cause the evil spirits to loose their influence. The Thai Christians apparently felt that the missionaries were unable to understand one of their basic concerns, the world of the spiritual powers. The missionaries considered the spirit world a superstition simply to be rejected. The problem was that the missionaries did not study these beliefs; they were unable to understand the problems of the Christians were facing, and thus they were not able to support the formulation of appropriate theological solutions to the problems.

Swanson suggests that the Thai Christians were more inclined to tolerate diversified theological views than the missionary body.¹¹ One should not make too many conclusions on their theological concerns. The Thais are often referred to as pragmatic people in religious affairs. This has been especially emphasized in the Buddhist

Thailand. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Many of the early missionaries, including Bradley, were also medical doctors. *Mo* was a honorific title used by healers and other experts in ancient times. It is still used as a polite way to address medical doctors.

¹⁰Terwiel 1994, 5, maintains that there are two fundamentally different religious approaches among Buddhists. Terwiel calls them syncretistic Buddhism and compartmentalized Buddhism. According to Marsden, in 1870 "Protestant evangelicals considered their faith to be the normative American creed". "The old order of American Protestantism was based on the interrelationship of faith, science, the Bible, morality and civilization." Marsden, 11-21. Quotes from pages 11 and 17. Swanson 1987, deals especially with Daniel and Sophie McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson. His research covers years 1867-1889. A classical example of using western science in evangelism is the conversion of Nan Inta. Nan Inta converted when McGilvary demonstrated that the mythical Buddhist cosmology was not true by predicting a solar eclipse. See: Swanson, 1987, 77-83. On differences in epistemological trends and their impact on Theology, especially missiology in Continental Europe and in Anglo-American world: To Stake a Claim. Mission and the Western Crisis of Knowledge. J. Andrew Kirk and Kevin J Vanhooser (Editors). Orbis Books, New York. 1999, 3-34.

¹¹Swanson 1984, 89.

missionary approach. Secondly, the individuals presenting liberal views were popular with the Thai Christians. The patron-client relationship between the missionaries and the Thai Christians influenced the attitude of Thai Christians. Thirdly, the Thai Christians at that time were not prepared to deal with theological questions; they lacked both tools and instructions on how to use them.¹²

4.1.2. Theological influences

American Evangelicalism and its radical form, Fundamentalism, have had a profound influence on the Thai Christian community. Both the pioneer missionaries, and the majority of the American mission agencies that entered Thailand after the Second World War, have their roots in evangelicalism. The European and Asian evangelical mission organizations have entered the country later, mostly after the 1960s. The term evangelical is difficult to define. It has been used for nineteenth-century and contemporary movements that emphasize personal conversion experiences and a reliance on the Bible as the only basis for Christian faith and conduct. It has thus been used both for movements within the historical Reformation Churches, and for younger denominations mostly born in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this study, the term evangelical is usually used in this wider meaning. The term American Evangelicalism is mostly used for contemporary churches and movements. Usually, the contemporary evangelical movements are, to some extent, critical towards the World Council of Churches. According to David Barret, the contemporary evangelicals are usually divided into three groups: conciliar evangelicals, conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists. Conciliar evangelicals are evangelicals in Anglican and Protestant Churches that are affiliated to the World Council of Churches. Several other classifications have been made.¹³

Fundamentalism as a distinct movement was a phenomenon of the early twentieth century, but a re-emergence of some ideas advocated by fundamentalism can be seen in the new rise of evangelicalism after the Second World War. During the years after the First World War, the fundamentalist movement reached the peak of its influence in America, expanding over the denominational borders. George M. Marsden makes a distinction between the fundamentalist groups, and the conservative denominational movements with their own traditions that temporarily joined in the fundamentalist fray. Some of them had only a tangential relationship to the rest of fundamentalism.

¹²On pragmatic approach in Buddhism: Phra Rajavaramuni 1985, 9. The persons who presented differing theological views were Rev. Evander B. McGilvary, (1891-1894 in Thailand), son of Rev. Daniel McGilvary, the pioneer missionary in the North, and Dr. C.C. Hansen of Lampang station in the beginning of the twentieth century. Swanson 1984, 88-89.

¹³Barret 1982, 821, 826, 827. Other definitions and subgroupings have been provided by f.ex Arthur F. Glasser (separatist fundamentalists, low-key dispensational evangelicals, charismatic evangelicals, ecumenical evangelicals and nonconciliar orthodox evangelicals) and David J. Bosch (confessional evangelicals, pietists evangelicals, fundamentalists, pentecostals, conservative or neo-evangelicals, ecumenical evangelicals and radical evangelicals). See: Matti Mäkelä 1999, 24-28.

During the years between 1917 and 1925, the fundamentalists struggled to gain control in the large Presbyterian and Baptist churches in the Northern USA. The peak of the influence of the fundamentalist movement was reached in 1925, and it rapidly declined after that. After 1925, fundamentalism found its base of support in local congregations and independent agencies, such as Bible schools and mission organizations.¹⁴

The term "fundamentalism" is often used with negative, sometimes derogative connotations, and recently it has been applied to militant movements within other religions as well. According to Marsden, fundamentalism should be understood as a genuine religious movement with intelligible beliefs: it was militant anti-modernist Protestant evangelicalism. Doctrinally, fundamentalism can be understood as an outgrowth of the dispensationalist tradition of the "millenarian" movement. The dispensationalist leaders regarded dividing and classifying as the only scientific methods in studying the Bible. All truth was contained in the Bible; all one needed to do was gather the teachings of the word of God and then deduce some general laws upon which the facts could be arranged. Behind of this method was the Scottish Common Sense Realism, based on the philosophy of Francis Bacon. Martin E. Marty emphasizes militancy as the difference between fundamentalism and traditionalism or conservatism.¹⁵

The member organizations of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, most of them American, and some of the mission organizations affiliated with the Church of Christ in Thailand can be described as evangelical. In Appendix 3, the member organizations of the EFT are divided into three categories. The first category is the conciliar evangelicals. These are mission agencies belonging to Churches drawing their history back to the time of Reformation. The second category comprises of organizations described as Evangelical, Fundamentalist or Baptist. These are presented as one group because making a distinction between Fundamentalists and other Evangelicals, using the material available, is problematic. The Pentecostals form the third category, characterized by the teaching of speaking in tongues as the sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴Marsden, 1982, 43-62, 141-153, 178-179, 191-195. Marsden argues that the fundamentalist experience was a major factor in shaping twentieth century evangelicalism. In summer 1925 in the famous "Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, William Jennings Bryan was ridiculed by the modernist press. Bryan, a leading figure in the fundamentalist movement, was a Presbyterian. The ridicule and Bryan's subsequent sudden death marked a turning point for the movement. It quickly lost its position as a nationally influential coalition. On the trial: Marsden 1982, 6, 184-188.

¹⁵Marsden 1982, 4-5, 49-62. Ernst Sandeen emphasized dispensationalist premillennialism as the root of fundamentalism. Marsden, while endorsing Sandeen's basic arguments, attempts to deal with fundamentalism as a broader movement. The broader movement was affected by many other cultural and social influences and traditions. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, ed. Fundamentalism Observed. The Fundamentalism Project. Vol. I. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. 1991, IX-X. The Fundamentalism Project contains several large volumes, including not only Christian movements, but Muslim fundamentalism and fundamentalist movements in other religions as well.

According to Samuel Wilson, 56 North American mission agencies had altogether 637 missionaries in Thailand in 1979. This means that around 1980, two-thirds of the missionaries came from North America. The proportion of the Americans was even higher earlier; prior to the Second World War most of the missionaries working in Thailand were Americans.¹⁶

The work of the early missionaries laid the foundation for the Church of Christ in Thailand. According to Swanson, the "Old School" thinking which presented American evangelicalism prior to the fundamentalist conflict was dominant among the Presbyterian missionaries until 1889. In the Presbyterian Old School thinking, conversion and revivalism gave substance to dualism. Actually, according to Herbert Swanson, dualism was the guiding principle behind the ministry of the early missionaries in Thailand. Generally, revivalism, pietism, individualism, and the dualistic world-view have been at the center of the traditions maintained by American Evangelicalism. Dr. Maen Pongudom, himself a member of the CCT, states that the CCT is "'American-Presbyterian-oriented' structurally, administratively and theologically".¹⁷

On the surface, the conservative theology was dominant among the (Presbyterian) Laos Mission in Northern Thailand until the First World War. Conclusions made concerning the situation in Northern Thailand can be applied to the entire Christian community. The American Presbyterian Mission was the dominant mission in the country. Northern Thailand was the region where most of the national Christians lived, and most of the missionaries were active there. Theological polarization on the nature of the Bible, which took place in the Presbyterian Church USA in the 1890s, affected the Mission in Thailand. In this debate, the traditional emphases on the reliability of the Bible prevailed and the "liberal" views failed to gain popular support. The Scottish Common Sense philosophy of Francis Bacon was employed as a tool to defend the biblical truths. Actually, the Common Sense philosophy dominated the American scientific and theological enterprise in the nineteenth century. Occasions in Northern Thailand are recorded when the polarization became evident. According to Swanson, the majority of the missionaries rejected not only Buddhism, but also the whole Northern Thai culture as "heathen" and unsuitable for the use of the church. On the other hand, those who showed appreciation of the Thai culture often accepted

¹⁶Samuel Wilson (ed.), Mission Handbook. American Protestant Ministries Overseas. Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center. Monrovia, California. 12th Edition. 1980, 684- 687. Wilson's list includes the about ten organizations in partnership with the Church of Christ in Thailand with about seventy missionaries. Some of the organizations listed by Wilson are registered in Thailand only as social service organizations. See: Thailand's Christian Directory 1982, 5. Update Christian Directory 1986-1987, 159-191. According to Smith, between 1903-1940 a dozen of new missions entered Thailand. Each of them had only few missionaries working in Thailand and during this period they were all pioneering in the early stages of their work. Many of the new missions were of American origin. Smith 1982, 188-194.

¹⁷Maen Pongudom 1979, 5-12. Swanson, 1987, 4-5, 49-54, 72-76. On contemporary leaders of the Evangelical movements: Christopher Catherwood, Five Evangelical Leaders. Hodder and Stoughton. London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto.1985, 9. Constitution of EFT 3.1. Marsden 1982, 5-8, 55-62, 228.

Buddhism as a way to salvation, and advocated the findings of what is called a higher criticism on the Bible.¹⁸

In the 1920s, fundamentalism took a definite form in the conflicts within the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the sending church of the missionaries to Thailand. According to Marsden, it had become evident by 1924 that there were at least three major parties in the Presbyterian controversy. The liberal faction was a minority, but it had a stronghold in many seminaries and in the church hierarchy. The second group can be described as theologically conservative, but this group did not want the theological issues to destroy the peace, unity and evangelical outreach of the church. Opposing them were the conservative militants, now generally known as fundamentalists. The year 1925 was the peak year for fundamentalist strength in the Presbyterian Church. After that its influence declined rapidly. The conflict was felt in the foreign mission of the church as well. The evidence indicates that the missionary body in Thailand was by 1940 divided into factions similar to the division within the Presbyterian Church in USA. This division became visible in connection to the campaigns of John Sung, the revival, and the Bible school controversy between 1938-1941. Apparently, the division already existed during the 1930s, but information on its impact before the campaigns of John Sung is lacking¹⁹

New forms of spiritual life started to influence the Thai Christian community in the 1920s. These early revival movements have almost been forgotten; Herbert Swanson was the first to notice their importance. The Presbyterian Old School revivalism had cherished rational, intellectually sound conversion experiences based on reason and a genuine understanding of reality. Now the emphasis shifted to deep emotional experiences instead of reasoning. The new influences concerned the spiritual life, not so much doctrines, and these seem not to have created controversies. The Siam Outlook, the periodical of the American Presbyterian Mission in Thailand, became the forum where the revivals became reported. However, factions were being formed. Miss Margaret McCord, Rev. Loren Hanna, Rev. Suk Phongsnoi and Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn, who became the most active supporters of John Sung, were already active in these early revivals.²⁰

The first of these revivals was called the House Party movement. The first House Parties were arranged in 1925. The House Parties consisted of short retreats of intense devotions and Bible studies. Margaret McCord compares the attitude of the leader of a House Party to that of a physician trying to get the patient cleaned out. "So in those

¹⁸Swanson 1984, 88-90. On the impact of the Common Sense philosophy on the American Christianity and on the theological polarization within the Presbyterians in America prior to the First World War: Marsden 1982, 14-17, 109-118.

¹⁹Marsden 1982, 176-184, 191-193. In 1936 a small group of the fundamentalists left to found a new church called The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

²⁰HERD # 54. On the Old School conversions: Swanson 1987, 72-76.

who have confessed, the feeling of loving fellowship prevails over any feeling of embarrassment.” House parties were arranged during several years in different locations. Statistical records of the extent of the movement are lacking.²¹

In addition to the House Parties, apparently an import from America, also Asian evangelists introduced revivalist practices in the 1930s. These campaigns can also be seen as evidence of the early stages of the cross-cultural mission of the Asian churches. In 1931, a Burmese Gospel team, sponsored by the American Baptists, arranged evangelistic campaigns throughout the country. The team consisted of three Americans, four ethnic Burmese and one Karen. It is remarkable that the team was well received despite the old animosity between Thailand and Burma. In 1936, Paul Lyn (Lin), a Chinese evangelist, spent seven months in Thailand. Boonmark Kittisarn and Suk Phongsnoi were his interpreters; Boonmark Kittisarn even wrote a very favorable report on Paul Lyn’s campaign.²²

American Evangelicalism has, in addition to its direct influence on the Protestant churches in Thailand, influenced the Thai churches indirectly. Most of the mission agencies or individual preachers and missionaries coming from Asian countries, and some of the European mission agencies have been heavily influenced by the American Evangelicalism. This concerns especially the Pentecostal movement and the Korean evangelism. The influence of American Evangelism in the evangelistic campaigns of Dr. John Sung is not so clearly documented. Culturally, his campaigns appeared alien to the majority of the American missionaries. His theological emphases were familiar to some segments in the American Evangelicalism.

The campaigns of John Sung had a long-lasting impact on the Thai Christian community. He presented himself as a defender of the Biblical faith. The opponent was vaguely described as liberal theology, often represented by missionaries. The missionaries co-operating with him could be described evangelicals or fundamentalists. These include the missionaries of the China Inland Mission, later called the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the largest of the mission agencies in Thailand. John Sung did not share with them the literalistic approach to the Bible. His hermeneutical method can be described as allegorical. The teaching on holiness and the exposure of sin were the central parts of his ministry. He maintained that before any victory could come to the Christian church, sin must be exposed. Becoming holy was the precondition of fruitful evangelism. Holiness was thus understood by him not as the goal itself, but as a means for effective evangelism. He distanced himself from the Pentecostal movement.²³

²¹Margaret C. McCord, *Life at the Bible School*. Siam Outlook. Vol V. No.4. April 1926, 140-141. Loren S. Hanna, *Bible retreat at Pang Muang*. Siam Outlook. Vol.VI. No 11. July 1929, 348, 350. According to Loren Hanna, Rev. Charoen Salkulkan was planning to conduct more House Parties in the future.

²²Siam Outlook. Vol VI. No 15. October 1930, 456-460. Vol VII. No 1. January 1931, 16, 26, 29. Vol VIII. No 2. April 1932, 64-65. HERD #54.

²³Lyall 1954, 61, 64, 67, 100, 145. "As a Bible teacher, John Sung would have horrified the great Bible

Praying aloud simultaneously (*phromkan*), which has become a common practice in almost all of the Protestant groups in Thailand, was begun in 1931 when John Sung was having a meeting with high school students. He asked the students to pray, but nobody rose. After a moment of awkward silence, two young girls rose up and started to pray simultaneously. People present in the meeting felt that the Holy Spirit had touched them, and they started to practice praying this way.²⁴

The first resident Pentecostal missionaries arrived in Thailand from Finland in 1946. The Finnish Free Foreign Mission is still the largest of the Pentecostal missions, with visas for 57 missionaries in 1981. The more extensive influence of Pentecostalism began in 1956. New mission agencies, most of them American, have arrived since 1956. The number of Pentecostal missions was eleven in 1985, with about 160 missionaries, less than half of who were from USA and Canada. By 1996 the number of Pentecostal groups had grown to more than 15. The Nordic missions have mostly been working in the provinces while the American missions started their work in Bangkok, where the fastest growing Pentecostal local churches can be found. The Scandinavian, especially the Finnish, Pentecostal movement has been influenced by Lutheran theology.²⁵

Before the arrival of the Pentecostal missionaries there are reported cases of speaking in tongues. According to Nishimoto, Rev. Saran Chaivat was the first to have this experience in 1940.²⁶

Pentecostalism emerged as a distinct movement from the holiness movement. According to D. William Faupel, the Pentecostal movement "was conceived within

teachers of our time. His exegesis was untenable. His ideas were often fanciful to the extreme - for instance... that Hell was in the center of the earth, where there is fire". John Sung disagreed with the teachings of the Jesus Family, the True Jesus Church and the Spiritual Gifts Society, described as enthusiastic but ignorant groups of Christians. The latest mentioned group was part of the Pentecostal movement, to which John Sung took distance. He did not agree with the teaching of the speaking in tongues as the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On the impact on the Christian community in Thailand: Hughes 1989, 31-34.

²⁴Nishimoto 1996, 44.

²⁵Kunnas 1973, 126. Vaurula- Ontermaa 1988, 7, 63-73, 108-115, 159. Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok 1946. (EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 71-73. Ruohomäki 1989, 79-82. Nishimoto 1996, VIII. On the Pentecostal movement in the Nordic countries see: Nils Bloch-Hoell. Pinsebevegelse. En undersøkelse av pinsebevegelsens tilblivelse, utvikling og særpreg med særlig henblikk på bevegelsens utforming i Norge. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo 1956, 379-381. (A study on the Pentecostal movement in Norway). Eila Helander. Naiset eivät vaienneet. Naisevankelistainstituutio Suomen Helluntailiikkeessä. Suomen Kirkkohistoriallisen Seuran toimituksia 142. Helsinki 1987. 16-17, 22, 185, 201. (A study on the institution of women evangelists in the Pentecostal movement in Finland. Summary in English). According to Helander, the Pentecostal movement in Finland has been building its identity in relation to the Lutheran tradition. The Lutheran tradition has not simply been rejected, but also accepted and adjusted. This concerns especially the doctrines on justification and sanctification.

²⁶ Nishimoto 1996, 46-48

the American Perfectionism in the midst of the 1857-58 revival". In the early stages there was strong eschatological aspect in the Pentecostal message. Actually, according to Faupel, the whole movement was an eschatological sign.²⁷

Nishimoto presents the 1938-1939 revival as a forerunner to the Pentecostal movement and John Sung as a preacher similar to the Pentecostals.²⁸ This can be justified only with qualifications. John Sung's campaigns influenced the entire Protestant community, and can not as such be understood as pre-Pentecostal movement. Historically, there were individuals acting as links between the 1938-1939 revival and the Pentecostal movement. The most notable of them was Boonmark Kittisarn. The first Pentecostal centers were formed in provinces where John Sung had his meetings. They were also places where Boonmark Kittisarn had been active. It is apparent that it was Boonmark Kittisarn's contacts, and not the revival of John Sung as such, that helped the Pentecostal movement spread. Possibly because of Boonmark Kittisarn's later reputation, Nishimoto and other Pentecostal writers do not give him the credit he actually deserves in the early stages of the Pentecostal movement in Thailand.²⁹

Spiritually and doctrinally, there are both continuities and discontinuities between the John Sung revival and the Pentecostal movement in Thailand. The Pentecostal movement adopted, like most other groups, the practice of praying aloud simultaneously. This practice was born in the early stages of John Sung's ministry. Both movements emphasized holiness, but the motivation was different. John Sung saw holiness as a means for effective evangelism. For the Pentecostals, holiness was a precondition for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In addition, the Pentecostals used the low spiritual standards of the CCT, together with baptism by adult immersion, as a justification for organizing the first Pentecostal congregations in Chiang Rai. Even Nishimoto admits that John Sung did not endorse the doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Generally, the Pentecostals in Thailand have not emphasized eschatology more than other groups. The emphasis has been on the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit.³⁰

Korean mission agencies have been working in Thailand since the 1950s, first integrated with the CCT, and then also as member organizations of the EFT since

²⁷ On the formation of the Pentecostal thought: Faupel 1996, 44-114. There are others who want to leave the origins of the Pentecostal movement more open. See: Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Spiritus ubi vult spirat. Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989). Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 42. Luther – Agricola – Society, Helsinki. 1998, 33-54.

²⁸ Nishimoto 1996, 43-46. Nishimoto claims that John Sung was influenced by the Asuza Street revival. On the defense of the Finnish Pentecostals on the events in Chiang Rai 1956: Ruohomäki 1988, 79-85.

²⁹ Nishimoto 1996, 43-46.

³⁰ Nishimoto 1996, 43-48.

1979.³¹ It should be noted that in addition to the Koreans, other Asian churches are sending missionaries to Thailand.³²

Korean Protestantism is divided into factions that can be called evangelical and ecumenical. The Evangelicals look upon the Ecumenicals as liberal. The various schisms and divisions in the Protestant churches in Korea have been deeply rooted in American Protestant fundamentalism and American religious anti-intellectualism. The schisms also have missionary roots. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the mission organizations adopted a comity system and divided the country. Even mission agencies of the same confession had their separate fields. The system was not made official. The comity system worked quite well until the division of the country in 1945.³³

The growth of the Korean churches has been linked to their special characteristics, and sociologically, to the modernization process of the country. Three traditional characteristics of the churches are mentioned. First, there are shamanistic tendencies. Second, there is a tradition of human liberation in the churches; the churches were

³¹Update Christian Directory 1989-1990, 3-4,8, 15. In 1989, there were two Korean organizations related to the EFT, the Korean Presbyterian Mission and the interdenominational Korea Global Village Mission. The Korea Presbyterian Mission listed twenty congregations as the Presbyterian Church in Thailand, most of them rural, two in Bangkok. The Korea Global Village Mission listed two congregations in Bangkok. The Korean Presbyterian Mission was running the Bangkok Graduate School of Pastoral Theology for Bible school graduates. The Korea Global Village Mission was in the process of establishing a theological seminary. *Warasan Khrisihak Presbyterian*. The Korea Presbyterian Mission in Thailand. November 1989, 3-9, 21. (Newsletter of the Presbyterian Church, a ten years anniversary publication). Update Christian Directory 1989 - 1990, 8, 10, 15. The students of both the institutes come from churches other than those established by the Korean missions. There are Korean Presbyterians affiliated with the CCT, too. In 1989, there were almost twenty Korean missionary families in Thailand.

In the beginning of the 1990s there were 300-500 missionaries sent by the Korean churches working in more than 40 countries. See: Kirsti Kena, Kaukoidän teologian näkökulmia. Korea, Japani ja Filippiinit. Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisuja 181. Helsinki. 1993,

³²Appendix 3 demonstrates that the mission organization members of the EFT, established in Asia, had 72 visas in 1981. Some of the visas have been on loan to other groups. In the CCT, the Asian Missions had 8 visas in 1982. In addition, there are Asian missionaries serving with other missions. The actual number of Asian missionaries to Thailand, mostly Japanese, Korean, Filipinos and overseas Chinese, was about eighty around 1988. According to lists of the missionaries given by the mission organizations, at least the Overseas Missionary Society, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Lutheran Mission in Thailand had Asian missionaries serving with them. See: Update Christian Directory 1989-1990

³³Suh David Kwang-Sun, American Missionaries and a Hundred Years of Korean Protestantism. International Review of Mission. Vol. LXXIV. No 293. January 1985, 11-14. The Southern and the Northern Presbyterians and the Australian Presbyterians had their own areas, as well as the Northern and the Southern Methodists. The Canadian Presbyterians joined in later. A whole number of International Review of Mission was devoted to Korean churches. Writers consisted of Korean theologians, rather critical to the quick growth of the Korean churches. (Suh David Kwang-Sun, Sung Kon Ho, Park Hyung-Kyu, Park Keun-Won, Kim Byung-Suh, Chi Myong-Kwan, Ahn Byung-Mu). See: International Review of Mission. Vol. LXXIV. No 293. January 1985.

devoted to the independence of the country during the Japanese occupation. Christianity did not enter Korea as the religion of the oppressors; instead, it became the driving force of the struggle for independence of the nation. Third, the Nevius principles were successfully applied to the Korean churches from the beginning. Growth has taken place mostly in urban areas. Development psychology, along with rapid industrialization and urbanization brought about a “bigness syndrome”. The explosive growth of the Korean churches can, therefore, be seen connected to the rapid industrialization and modernization of the country, along the traditional characteristics of the Korean church.³⁴

In Thailand, Korean Evangelicalism has influenced the discussion on the expansion and organization of the church. Training tours to Korea have been organized since 1978. The purpose of the tours has been to expose the Thai Christians to the fast-growing Korean churches in order to learn from their experiences. The actual results of the work of the Korean mission agencies in Thailand has not differed much from the experiences of the other mission agencies struggling to open their ministry.³⁵

Thai Christian leaders are ambivalent in their relation to Korean Christianity and the Korean missionaries. The rapid growth of the Korean churches is admired, and the organizational structure of the Korean central churches is copied or applied. Rev. Wan Phetchsongkram of the Romklao Church summarizes this desire by stating that he saw the rapid growth of the Korean churches, and wanted the same to happen in Thailand. The practical way to accomplish this he learned from an American Baptist church, where he saw members together carrying the responsibility of the work of the church. However, co-operation with the Korean missionaries has not been smooth. The Korean missionaries are often seen to lack knowledge of, or sensitivity to, Thai culture and the Thai context. They have also contributed to the fragmentation. Rev. Chana Seung Hoi Chung, who has been a missionary from Korea to Thailand for twenty years, sees the lack of unity among the Korean missionaries as the biggest challenge for the mission of the Korean churches to Thailand. In 1992, 16 agencies had sent missionaries to Thailand. The missionaries, altogether 44 families, worked with 12 different organizations.³⁶

³⁴Kim, Byung-Suh. The Explosive Growth of the Korean Church Today: A Sociological Analysis. International Review of Mission. Vol. LXXIV. No. 293. January 1985, 59-72. Kena 1993, 58-61.

³⁵Smith 1982, 225. The tours have been organized by the Thailand Church Growth Committee. According to Smith, by 1982, 130 pastors, leaders and laymen, including missionaries, had taken part into the tours. Tours have been arranged later as well. I took part in a tour organized in August 1981. Jaakko Mäkelä. Report, 1981.

³⁶Wan Phetchsongkram, interview June 3,1999. Chana (Seung Hoi) Chung, A Study on Church Planting Strategy of Korean Missions in Thailand. California Graduate School of of Theology. 1992,32-33. (Unpublished Doctor of Ministry dissertation) According the Dr. Chana The Presbyterian Church in Korea, his own Church, has sent missionaries to Thailand who in 1992 worked with four different organizations.

The early Korean missionaries saw themselves better suited for co-operation with the Thai churches than the Western missionaries.³⁷ The Korean missionaries were working in the CCT at that time. Because of their few numbers, they had neither the possibilities nor the funds to influence the administration of the CCT. According to my interpretation, the evangelical segment of the CCT was on the defensive, and needed the support of missionaries to further their concerns. They did not see the Korean missionaries as a challenge but as allies in an internal struggle. In the 1980s and 1990s the situation was essentially different. The Korean missionaries have established several organizations. Apparently, they also have ample funds to support their organizations. Thus, they are not dependent on co-operation with other mission agencies or Thai churches.

The impact of Korean Evangelism is pronounced in the independent churches. As was stated in the Chapter 3, many of the independent churches had looked upon the Korean churches as models. There are Korean missionaries working with several of the younger independent churches. Some of them were actually founded by the Koreans.

4.1.3. Ecumenicals versus Evangelicals and the Thai Christianity

In the 1920s, the Thai Christian leaders began to travel abroad and participate in international conferences. A Thai minister first participated in the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1928, and in 1929, Dr. John R. Mott arranged a conference in Bangkok to discuss the findings of the Jerusalem Conference. According to Kenneth Wells, the John R. Mott Conference "evoked a new mind-set in the Christian leaders". This means that the formation of an indigenous national church became topical.³⁸

An interesting question is how much the theological reflections of the Jerusalem Conference and the other discussions within the International Missionary Council since then influenced the Thai Christian leaders. The Jerusalem Conference has been described as a crisis conference in which the influences of the Social Gospel theology entered the discussions within the International Missionary Council.³⁹

The establishment of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand should be seen in the context of increased co-operation between different groups of Evangelicals. An important part of the theological context of the contemporary evangelicalism is the Church Growth theology initiated by Donald McGavran. The direct influence of the Church Growth theology in Thailand can be traced back to the First Annual Thailand

³⁷Kim 1976, 92-100.

³⁸Wells 1958, 138-139.

³⁹On the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council see f.ex. Shivute 1980, 42- 65.

Church Growth Seminar in Chiang Mai in 1979, where Dr. McGavran was a speaker. The Thailand Church Growth Committee was organized in 1971. Since 1980, the principles of the Church Growth-theology have been taught in almost all of the Bible schools and theological seminars.⁴⁰

The CCT has been a member of the World Council of Churches since the Amsterdam Conference in 1948. The controversy that developed within the CCT after 1970 should be seen in the context of the theological polarization, which took place within the World Council of Churches. This happened after the Uppsala Conference in 1968, and the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Bangkok in 1973. The Bangkok Assembly apparently contributed to the polarization within the CCT. One of the official delegates from Thailand in the Assembly was Wichien Watkicharoen, the General Secretary of the CCT of that time. Two years later he left the CCT to establish the Church of God.⁴¹

The Bangkok Assembly highlighted the gap of communication between the evangelical segment of the CCT and the radical segment within the World Council of Churches. Samuel Kim presents the sermon by Wichien Watkicharoen in opening service of the Assembly, and the response it created as an example of this lack of understanding. Rev. Wichien's sermon itself was not polemical, but it created strong critical comments.⁴²

Apparently, the concerns of the majority of the Thai Protestants were far removed from the topics debated within the World Council of Churches in the 1960s and the early 1970s. According to Wichien Watkicharoen the theological problems occupying the minds of Thai Christians in the 1970s were infant – adult baptism, the mode of baptism, praying for the sick, belief in miracles, and the food regulations according the Mosaic Law⁴³

⁴⁰Smith 1982, 224. The theological institutes are publishing annual catalogues with lists of courses offered. On McGavran: Pinola, 1995.

⁴¹On the ecumenical relations of the CCT: Wells 1958, 146, 174-179. Bangkok Assembly has been described as a forum where the leaders of the Asian and African churches spoke their minds, and a religious as well as a political meeting. On Bangkok 1973 Assembly: f.ex Scherer 1982, 72-73, 92-97. Pelastus tänään. Bangkokissa 29.12.1972-12.1.1973 pidetyn Kirkkojen Maailmanneuvoston Maailmanlähetyksen ja evankelioimisen kommission kokouksen asiakirjoja. Toim. Juhani Forsberg. Kirjaneliö. Helsinki 1973, 15-17. Minutes and Reports of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches December 31, 1972 and January 9-12, 1973. Bangkok Assembly 1973, 46-50.

⁴²Kim refers to conference reports: The sermon “was very bad, representing the revivalistic theology of the Church in Thailand. The enumeration of ‘so many souls saved’ slaps the whole dialogue in the face.” Kim 1976, 232, 236-239.

⁴³Wichien Watkicharoen, Karn plae Phrakhampi. Sine Anno, 8-9. *Botkhvam*. RG 004/78 (1). Box 3. Folder 3. Payap. The document is a manuscript for a book written during the period Dr. Wichien was the General Secretary of the CCT.

The Lausanne Movement held its Consultation on World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980. Representatives of Thai churches and mission organizations were called to attend the consultation; a national consultation was held in the same resort simultaneously with the international meeting. The meeting was principally a strategy consultation to study the issues and strategies relating to the reaching a specific group of people not yet reached.⁴⁴

4.1.4. Bible translation and theological terminology

Meaningful contextualization requires a Bible available in the vernacular. The first pioneer missionaries to Thailand in 1828 initiated the translation of the Bible into the Central Thai language. It took a surprisingly long time before the entire Bible was printed in 1893, yet Thai had been a written language for several hundred years. The New Testament was printed in 1843. Translation of the Bible was not high on the priority list of the missionaries. In the nineteenth century, only few people in Northern Thailand were able to read Central Thai. Therefore, the mission established its own Northern Thai press. The press began to function in 1892, and in the following year Matthew and the Acts were printed primarily for evangelistic purposes. Between 1906 and 1913, parts of the New Testament, and in 1914-1927 parts of the Old Testament were printed. After that, Central Thai began to be used also in the North, and no new Northern Thai Bibles were printed.⁴⁵

The printing of the Northern Thai Bibles was terminated, probably in compliance with the policies of the government to centralize and promote Central Thai as the national language. This shift most likely further slowed down the development of theological thought. Most of the Christians lived in the North. In order to read the Bible they now had to learn a foreign language. Though Central Thai and Northern Thai, *Kham Muang*, are closely related languages, they are barely mutually understandable.

During the twentieth century, new revisions of the Central Thai Bible have been published by the Thailand Bible Society. The reprint of the revised Bible published in 1973 has become widely accepted. It is commonly admitted that it is as difficult for the ordinary citizen to understand this version as the previous ones. The 1973 version employs only a few Buddhist terms. An exception is the terminology of the guardian spirit cult employed for evil spirits in several passages. The terminology used for the Holy Trinity is mostly taken from the court language. There have been attempts to prepare popular language versions, aimed at fourth or sixth grade level reading skills.

⁴⁴The Reports of the Consultation: How Shall They Hear. Consultation on World Evangelization. Official Reference Volume. Thailand Reports. (16-27 June, 1980). Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Wheaton, Illinois, USA.

⁴⁵Wells 1958, 195-196. Smith 1982, 14-15, 190. Swanson 1984, 90-92. The Book of Thousand Tongues. Revised Edition. United Bible Societies. 1972, 427.

In spite of the optimistic report of the translators, these versions have not been received with enthusiasm. The popular language version has created controversy for employing some specifically Buddhist terms. People like Wan Phetchsongkram have criticized this version for using terms, which carry with them connotations alien to the biblical concepts. According to him, the popular version employs Buddhist terms in places where this leads to misunderstandings. The specific example is translating the Greek *logos* in John 1:1 as the term Dhamma (*Phra Tham*), which is the technical term for the Buddhist teaching. On the other hand, the use of the Buddhist terms has also been defended.⁴⁶

Special problems are met in translating the Bible into Thai. First, the written and spoken languages differ from each other. Secondly, the appropriate level of language must be chosen. The relative status of the interacting persons is always demonstrated by the words used. Following levels are observed: colloquial language used between intimates; ordinary polite language; the religious language used for Buddhist monks; and the court language; partly used also for divine beings. According to the strictly observed etiquette, the different levels of language can not be mixed. The third problem is the extremely large vocabulary of the language.

Especially since the 1970s there have been attempts to develop Thai as a theological language. A major effort was the publication of a theological dictionary, *Pramuansap sasanart lae prachaya* in 1971 by Suriyaban, the publishing house of the CCT. The project was sponsored by the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. The committee preparing the dictionary consisted of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians. Most of the Protestants, both Thais and expatriates, were related to the Thailand Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai. The 1971 dictionary is now out of print. A new project to produce a new dictionary was initiated within the Fellowship of the Theological Schools in Thailand. A draft edition with a name *Pramuansap khristanasart* containing 200 words was published in 1988.⁴⁷

The early missionaries avoided using the Buddhist religio-philosophical terms in their proclamation of the Gospel. According to them, these words could not convey the Christian message. Instead, they used ordinary Thai words with new meanings or

⁴⁶Kathleen Cann, United Bible Societies to Raisa Lehtimäki, Finnish Bible Society February 25, 1991. Howard Hatton, interview around 1976. United Bible Society, General Office. The Catholics took active part in translating the popular version. Wan Phetchsongkram 1975, 7, 45-48. Wan Phetchsongkram has been a Buddhist monk for eight years. On the other hand, Maen Pongudom defends the usage of Buddhist terms in the Bible translation. According to him the usage of Buddhist terms forces the Christians to explain the biblical truths meaningfully to the Buddhists. Maen Pongudom 1979, 148-152. Example of the guardian spirit terminology in the Bible: Eph 6:11-13. On cosmology of the popular Buddhism and the cult of the guardian spirits: Tambiah 32-52, 263-284.

⁴⁷*Pramuansap sasanart lae prachaya* 1971, Preface. *Pramuansap khristanasart*. *Chabab pee* 1988. *Ruabruam doi Samaphan Khristanasart nai Prathet Thai*. (Dictionary of Christian Theology. 1988 edition).

invented or compounded new words. As a consequence only few Buddhist terms derived from the Pali language are used in the Thai Bible.⁴⁸

In the contemporary society, the usage of terms derived from Pali is not restricted to Buddhism alone. The entire terminological apparatus needed in sciences and social sciences is developed from Pali and to some extent from Sanskrit. Latin origin words through the English language have of course been employed as well. Pali has thus become an integral part of higher learning. In theology, Pali cannot be avoided.

The theological dictionaries reflect the process of developing Thai as a theological language. A few observations can be made. Only English and Thai are used in both dictionaries. This reflects the strong impact of the Anglo-American culture on Thai Christianity. The originally Latin or Greek words are presented only in their English form. No need has been felt to introduce German or any other languages. The Thai Bible translations reflect the same dependence. English language editions have been serving as models for the Thai Bible. It has been reported that the 1973 edition and the popular edition resemble the Revised Standard Version and the Good News Bible respectively. An even clearer example was that in 1999 the International Bible Society published the Thai edition of the New International Version.

4.1.5. Theological education

The Payap University of the CCT in Chiang Mai celebrated the McGilvary Centennial in 1989 to commemorate the hundred years of theological education in Thailand. In 1889 a training school was formally opened in Chiang Mai. The students were older men who were serving as elders in the churches. Since 1923 until 1962 the name McGilvary Theological Seminary was used. After that the seminary was called the Thailand Theological Seminary. It has become registered as a private university, with the Theological Faculty as one of its faculties.⁴⁹

The Thailand Christian Directory 1999 listed the names of 32 theological seminaries or Bible schools. Of these, about ten are institutes that offer formal theological studies. The Diploma of Theology and Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity degrees are conferred. Some of these institutes also offer lay training. The other institutes listed in the Directory concentrate on lay training or short courses. Richard Herring has made an analysis of the spiritual formation at six theological institutes. His research contains short presentations on the history and doctrinal positions of the institutes.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Maen Pongudom 1979, 119-121.

⁴⁹Swanson 1984, 81. *Sanasartsueksa* 100 pee 1989, 39,71.

⁵⁰Thailand Christian Directory 1999, 250-251. A short introduction to the theological institutes: *Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 30-42. The Lutheran Institute for Theological Education of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is to some degree an exemption. It has also a one- year Certificate program and is involved in membership training. [Lutheran Institute of Theological Education](#).

In addition to the Payap University, the CCT has established the Bangkok Institute of Theology. It was established and is run by the 7th District, the Chinese Presbyterian churches. It was established in 1941, and is accredited by the Association of Theological Education in South-East Asia, (ATESEA).⁵¹

Two institutes, related to the EFT, the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary (BBCS) and the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education (LITE), have been accredited by the Asia Theological Association. The BBCS was established in 1971 by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and some Thai Christian groups. The LITE is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Its ministry has been developing gradually beginning from 1981.⁵²

There are two regional institutes with a similar theological background as the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary. The Phayao Bible Training Centre was established around 1965 in Phayao, Northern Thailand. Around 1990, one third of its students came from the ethnic minorities. The Christian and Missionary Alliance has had a Bible school in Khonkaen, Northeastern Thailand. It was closed, but was reopened in the middle of the 1990s, using the name Northeastern Bible College.⁵³

The Full Gospel Training Center is the oldest of the Pentecostal Bible institutes, opened in 1960 by the Finnish Free Foreign Mission. The Thailand Pentecostal Bible College has become the major Pentecostal theological institute. It was established in 1969. There are several Pentecostal Bible schools of various sizes and with various training programs. Some of these have been established by the larger Pentecostal local churches, some by Pentecostal mission organizations.⁵⁴

The Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1952 by the Thailand Baptist Mission (The Southern Baptists Convention).⁵⁵

Catalogue 1997-1998. The other institutes have also some programs for church members. Herring analyzes the spiritual formation at the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary, the Bangkok Institute of Theology, the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education, the Phayao Bible College, Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary and the Thailand Pentecostal Bible College. Richard S Herring, Spiritual Formation at Six Thai Evangelical Theological Institutions. Columbia Biblical Seminary and School of Missions. A Division of Columbia International University. Columbia, South Carolina, 1999. An unpublished Doctor of Ministry dissertation.

⁵¹*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 33. Herring 1999, 32-36.

⁵²Bangkok Bible College and Seminary 25 Years 1971-1996. 11-14. Lutheran Institute of Theological Education. Catalogue 1997-1998, 1-3. Herring 1999, 27-32, 36-39.

⁵³*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 31-32. Thailand Christian Directory 1997, 380; 1999, 250. Herring 1999, 39-43.

⁵⁴*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 31-32. Thaimaan täyden evankeliumin raamattukoulu. 1985. (25 years anniversary publication in Thai and Finnish) 5-13, 39-46. Reaching Our World. 25th Anniversary. 1994. 35-37. (In Thai and English). Herring 1999, 72-75.

The Korean mission organizations have established several theological institutes. The Thailand Evangelical Seminary offers the Diploma of Theology, Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity programs. The Bangkok Graduate School of Pastoral Theology offers programs in pastoral theology for persons who have had formal studies in Theology and are serving as pastors.⁵⁶

The Diplomas and degrees conferred by the theological institutes are not accredited by the government agencies, with the exception of Payap University. Institutes that wish to have their degrees accredited have to apply for accreditation by Asia Theological Association or the Association of Theological Education in Southeast Asia. It is also possible to affiliate with a theological seminary overseas.

The organization of studies is quite similar in all institutes offering diploma and degree studies. The first years of the Full Gospel Training Center were an interesting experiment to apply the idea of the Buddhist Lenten retreat to Christian usage. The school was opened for three months a year. The Bible school could not keep this mode of instruction; it had become outdated as training for full-time ministry. Continuation classes were added, but for the long run this was not felt adequate enough. Both students and churches were not satisfied. The other Pentecostal groups started to organize full-time studies in competition, first the Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission operating in the South. This became the reason for first open conflict among the Pentecostals in Thailand after the Jesus only dispute. A new curriculum was developed in 1981. The studies were arranged so that they became compatible with studies at other theological institutes.⁵⁷

During the 1980s most of the theological institutes have been expanding. The number of students has been increasing, and almost all of the institutes were building or expanding their facilities.⁵⁸

⁵⁵*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 39-40. Herring 1999, 69-72.

⁵⁶*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 36-37, 40-4.

⁵⁷The Catalogues of the various institutes reveal the similarities. An expressed reason has been to make it possible for students to study in another institute as well. This is important especially for studies for degrees. On the Full Gospel Training Center: Kettunen 1996, 130, 207, 255. Ruohomäki 1988, 125-126. On the conflict with the Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission: Ruohomäki 1988, 125-126. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 266-269.

⁵⁸*Phuean Phunam* 11, 1990, 30-42. Bangkok Bible College and Seminary 25 Years, 11-17. The Bangkok Bible College and Seminary, the Bangkok Institute of Theology, the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary and the Thailand Pentecostal Bible College have campuses that can accommodate 50 to 100 full-time students each. The Lutheran Institute of Theological Education has had 10-15 full-time students at Certificate and Diploma programs. In addition more than ten have been studying part-time for the Bachelor of Theology degree after completing the Diploma of Theology studies.

The Fellowship of the Theological Institutes in Thailand (*Samaphan sasanart nai Prathet Thai*) was established as an informal organization of cooperation of the Protestant theological institutes. The representatives of the institutes meet usually twice a year. Its most important functions are sharing information of the plans and projects of the member organizations.⁵⁹

Questionnaires and interviews give information on the theological studies of the leaders of the independent churches.

Theological studies of the leaders of the independent churches		
	1987	1999
Only in Thailand	4	15
Only abroad	6	3
Thailand and abroad	3	1
No formal studies	2	2
Total	15	21

Sources: Questionnaires 1987,1999

The 1987 survey gave rather accurate information on the independent churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. Information was available from 15 of the 18 churches. Several of the leaders, also the founders, of the independent churches had all their theological studies abroad. Many of them were already adults when they felt the calling for a full-time ministry in the church. It would have been difficult for them to join the young students at the training centers. Three of those who had formal studies in Thailand studied at the Bangkok Bible College. The Bangkok Bible College was of special importance for the New Life Churches. Almost all of the leaders of these churches were related to it as alumni or as personnel in 1987.⁶⁰

Information from 1999 survey is less accurate. Only 21 of the 75 churches gave information on the theological studies of their leaders. The number of leaders who had studied only abroad seems to be lower than in 1987. Actually, most of the leaders who answered the 1987 survey continue to serve in their churches, but did not return the 1999 questionnaire. Almost all of the leaders with studies only abroad are working in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. However, the portion of leaders educated in Thailand has increased. The Bangkok Bible College and Seminary has become instrumental for the independent church movement. Nine of the individuals who returned the questionnaire were BBCS graduates, one has been studying at BBCS and Phayao, and one was a Phayao graduate. The close connection between the BBCS and the New Life churches has continued. In some cases, already a second generation of pastors has been students or personnel of the BBCS (Makkasan New Life Church, Suanphlu New Life church.)

⁵⁹Authors observations. The Fellowship has a working committee of three persons. Minutes of the meetings are distributed to the member institutes.

⁶⁰Questionnaires May 1987. Bangkok Bible College 15 Years. Anniversary publication. 1986, 8-13.

4.1.6. The development of ecclesiological thought in Thailand

This section continues to analyze the theological context in which the independent churches in Thailand are living. The focus is on the development of the ecclesiological thought in the Protestant community, especially among the independent churches.

Parachurch organizations

The individual conversion is central in the American evangelical tradition, which has profoundly influenced the Christian community in Thailand. The church has almost no soteriological significance. According to Marsden, American Evangelicalism is structured according to the system of free enterprise. A special phenomenon is called "empire building": the formation of independent Christian organizations, often led by laymen. Especially Dwight L. Moody has set the model for these free agencies. These agencies have been called parachurch organizations since the 1980s. This term is used for Christian organizations that function separately from the organized churches. The term "parachurch" means "almost a church, resembling a church".⁶¹

The parachurch organizations have created some debate within the Evangelical movements. In addition to the terms church and parachurch, other sets of terms have been proposed. Ralph Winter, in defending the parachurch agencies, proposed the terms "modality" and "soladity", comparing the parachurch agencies with the orders of the Roman Catholic Church. Another set of terms used correspondingly with modality and soladity has been "congregational structure" and "missionary structure".⁶²

As is demonstrated in Appendix 3, many of the mission agencies working in Thailand are independent agencies and can thus be called parachurch agencies. In addition to them, there are Christian relief and development agencies registered only by the Public Welfare Department of the Ministry of Interior. It is significant that both the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the largest of the mission agencies, and the World

⁶¹Risto Ahonen, Kristillisen lähetystyön ja amerikkalaisen imperialismien dilemma John R. Mottin ajattelussa. Helsinki. 1983, 34,35, 55-57. Ahonen quotes Moody. "Mark me, all the churches in Christendom never saved a soul. Don't think joining a church is going to save you". For John R. Mott, experience was a central theme. He called a Christian a person who had experience with Christ. Barret 1982, 837. Marsden 1982, 34, 194, 195, 228. Criticism toward organized churches is found in the contemporary evangelicalism. Christopher Catherwood criticizes Billy Graham for inviting all local Protestant churches, in some countries also the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, to join in his evangelistic campaigns. According to Catherwood, Graham is in danger of compromising the true faith with the churches influenced by liberal theology. Catherwood 1985, 258.

⁶²For a short introduction to the debate and definition of the terms: C. Peter Wagner, Leading your Church to Growth. Secret of Pastor/People Partnership in Dynamic Church Growth. MARC Europe. World Vision. 142-164. On critical evaluation of the parachurch agencies: George W. Peters, Biblical Theology of Missions. Moody Press, Chicago. 1972, 214-241.

Vision, the most influential of the Christian relief and development agencies, are independent organizations.⁶³

Several independent Christian organizations were established in Thailand by Thai Christians as member organizations of the EFT. These can also be called parachurch agencies. The largest theological institutes, the Bangkok Bible College and the Bible Training Center, Phayao, are independent organizations. Further examples include the Thailand Christian Youth Fellowship, the Christian Organization for Handicapped in Thailand, and Diakonos, an organization set up to provide training on Christian social concerns.⁶⁴

Influence of the Korean central churches

Contrary to the American Evangelicalism, Korean Evangelicalism has been interested in the church. Because the central churches in Korea have been rapidly growing and expanding, the churches in other Asian countries have been interested to learn from their experiences. The discussion about these experiences began in the end of 1970s.

For the Thais, the Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul is the best known of the Korean central churches. Its leader Dr. Yonggi Cho has visited Thailand at least twice, and his books have been translated to Thai. There are also other central churches, that have become known through study tours.⁶⁵

The cell group (central) churches in Thailand, especially the Hope of Bangkok Church, have copied the organizational structure of the Full Gospel Central Church.

By 1978, the Full Gospel Central Church was operating in the entire Metropolitan Seoul. The city was divided into church districts, further broken down into sections. In each section there were 25-90 home cell units, each led by a home cell unit leader. Each home cell unit was ideally composed of 8-15 households; if the number increased above that, another cell unit was formed. The church appointed the district heads and section leaders. The church also had elders, deacons and deaconesses. The

⁶³For the list of the organizations registered by the Public Welfare Department: Update Christian Directory 1986-1987, 159-191.

⁶⁴(EFT) *Raigan prajam pee* 1985, 40-42. EFT, List of the member organizations, 1987.

⁶⁵Hurston & Hurston 1978, 11. Jaakko Mäkelä, Report, 1981. In 1981, when Thai churches received decisive influences, the Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul was the largest of the central churches in Korea, with a total membership of 161,370. There are also other central churches in other denominations of evangelical persuasion, such as the Yong Nak Presbyterian Church with 16,628 communicant members in 1981. The Full Gospel Central Church had its beginnings in 1958, and by 1978 the membership had grown to 65,000. Study tours from Thailand to Korea have often been sponsored by the Asia Church Growth Institute and the Yong Nak Church. There have been tours in which the Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul has been the sponsor. John W. Hurston and Karen L. Hurston have written on the Home Cell Unit system and the pastor's role in the church.

deacons and deaconesses worked for the care of the members. The elders formed the advisory board for leading the church, and were also appointed as overseers of the various church departments. The elders were subordinate to the main pastor and supportive to the assistant pastors (district heads). The elder board chose the elders in an annual meeting. Their final appointment came from Pastor Yonggi Cho. The same applied for the deacons. The district heads, also called assistant pastors, were chosen at an annual meeting, but their final appointment also came from Pastor Cho.⁶⁶

In the cell group/central church model, a strong mother church establishes cell groups in different parts of the city. All groups come together in the worship service in the central church.⁶⁷ Actually, the structure of the church resembles more a diocese than a local congregation, and the pastor is functioning as *de facto* bishop.

The organizational structure gives great authority to the main pastor. The structure is in sharp contrast to what has traditionally been the structure in Thai churches where the elders have been leading the local congregations.

Revivals and divisions

The revivals that have led to the establishment of new churches have shaped the Protestant community in Thailand. These revivals often began inside the existing churches, but finally led to the establishment of a new church. The first was the process begun in connection with Dr John Sung's visit in 1939.

The second process of divisions within existing churches began with the organization of the first Pentecostal congregations among members leaving the CCT. The controversy on the Pentecostal awakening and re-baptisms in the Chiang Rai province in Northern Thailand led to a split within the CCT. The immediate cause was a visit by two Thai Christians who were touched by the awakening in Bangkok. This awakening was in connection with the crusade of T.L. Osborn, which the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission had helped to organize in 1956. Christians joining the revival were re-baptized. The Finnish missionaries organized the first Pentecostal congregations in 1958.⁶⁸

The Finnish Pentecostal missionaries were accused of "stealing the sheep" in the controversy in Chiang Rai.⁶⁹ In defense of the Finnish Pentecostals, Jouko

⁶⁶Hurston & Hurston 1978, 23-31.

⁶⁷Hurston & Hurston 1978, 23-24. *Anuson khrob rob 4 pee*, 1983, 9-10, 14,18. *Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep*, 1986, 7.

⁶⁸Ruohomäki 1989, 79-82. Vaurula-Ontermaa 1988, 108-115, 159. Pages 108-115 is an account of the campaign, based on interview with Verner Raassina. After Osborn was asked to leave Thailand, Don Price continued the campaign.

Ruohomäki claims that they may have been confused with the United Pentecostal Church. Ruohomäki states that the Finnish Pentecostals did not plan to divide the CCT congregations, and did not enter them uninvited. He emphasizes that those who were renewed spiritually and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit were actually excommunicated. Ruohomäki emphasizes spiritual renewal as the main cause for the emergence of the Pentecostal congregations. However, this is only partially true. The real issue was the insistence on adult immersion as the only proper baptism. According to Ruohomäki, "Presbyterians in the beginning excommunicated those who took the Biblical water baptism". There were people who were touched by the renewal but remained in their old congregations. Only those who were re-baptized joined the new Pentecostal congregations.⁷⁰

Later, more divisions have taken place. Most clearly documented are the cases of the United Pentecostal Church (Jesus Only movement) and the Church of Christ (non-instrumental).

The United Pentecostal Church entered Thailand in the early 1960s, invited by Boonmark Kittisarn. Rev. Boonmark himself was active at least in Bangkok and in Chiang Rai in the North. The situation was delicate for the missionaries of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission, because Boonmark Kittisarn had earlier been co-operating with them. In the beginning he was not successful, but eventually succeeded in persuading some of the members of the Pentecostal congregations to follow him. In Bangkok, some of the members of the Bangkok Church followed him. The United Pentecostal Church grew mostly by proselytizing among the Pentecostals in the North, the churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the Northeast, and the CCT. It is claimed that considerable financial help was offered to those who joined the United Pentecostal Church.⁷¹

The Church of Christ (non-instrumental) has been growing largely by transfer from other churches. The church is referred to by the name non-instrumental, because they forbid the use of musical instruments in the worship services. The church itself has estimated that the growth by transfer was 65 percent in the North, and 85 per cent in the Northeast. They succeeded in persuading several of the co-workers of the Finnish Pentecostals to join them, but later many of them returned.⁷²

⁶⁹Kim 1980, 202-204. Hong-Shik Shin, Principles of Church Planting as Illustrated in Thai Theravada Buddhist Context. Kanok Bannasan (OMF Publishers). Bangkok. 1989, 184-185. Ruohomäki 1989, 79-86.

⁷⁰Ruohomäki 1989, 73, 81-84. Quote from page 81.

⁷¹Smith 1982, 252. Ruohomäki 1989, 105,106. Boonmark Kittisarn visited the USA after his visit in Finland summer 1959. The United Pentecostal Church entered Thailand soon after his visit to the USA. Exact date is not known.

⁷²Smith 1982, 253,254. Ruohomäki 1989, 106,107.

The Constitution of the Church of Christ in Thailand

The Constitution of the Church of Christ in Thailand has widely influenced ecclesiological thinking in Thailand, especially the understanding on the organization, ministry and offices of the church. Individuals leaving the CCT and joining other groups have brought the patterns of the CCT to their new congregations with them. They have not criticized the structures of the CCT even after leaving it. Boonmark Kittisarn, and Wichien Watkicharoen, who established independent churches, and Suk Phongsnoi, who was one of the initiators of the EFT, were in prominent positions in CCT. It has also been documented that some new congregations were organized according to the patterns of the CCT, for example the first Pentecostal congregations in Chiang Rai. Later, the same pattern has been used for organizing other Pentecostal congregations.⁷³

The CCT was established in 1934 when the first constitution was adopted. In this study, references will be made to the Thai edition of 1974. The Constitution of the CCT (1974) is divided into four divisions. The First Division contains the confessional basis. The Second Division presents the form of government, consisting of the offices of the church, worship and sacraments, the local church, the District Assembly, and the General Assembly. The Third Division explains the parliamentary procedure and church discipline. The Fourth Division states how the constitution can be amended.⁷⁴

The CCT is organized, according to the Presbyterian form of church government, into graded assemblies on local, district and national levels. This form of government was developed in contrast to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The background is in the Swiss Reformation led by Jean Calvin, and it is expressed in the Reformed Confessions. It is in formal analogy with the democratico-republican idea of the state.⁷⁵

The Constitution of the CCT reflects the special problems of the Thai language in ecclesiology. It attempts to use the Thai term *khrischak*, which is usually used for a local church, correspondingly with the English term Church denoting a national organized body. This attempt has failed. According to the Constitution of the CCT, its

⁷³Ruohomäki 1988, 73-78,89-90. "...the Presbyterian background in Chiang Rai, which was a model for new Pentecostal congregations". Quote from page 90.

⁷⁴Wells 1958, 143- 145. Smith, 1982, 183, 186, 188-195, 197. According to Wells, the name Church of Christ in Siam (later Thailand) was chosen in the hope that all Protestant bodies would become its members. Only the Presbyterians and Baptists joined in.

⁷⁵On the Presbyterian form of church government f.ex: Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft. Dritte, völlig neubearbeitete Auflage. 5. Band. J.C.B. Mohr. Tübingen. 1961, 540-544. New Dictionary of Theology. Ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright. Intervarsity Press. Leicester. 1988, 530-531. On Calvin's theology of the church and on the Reformed confessions f.ex.: Adam, Band 2, 1965, 354-363.

official name is *Khrischak nai Prathet Thai*, the Church in Thailand. The term *Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* is used for the General Assembly of the CCT. However, in written and oral every day usage the CCT is known as *Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai*. The word *sapha* means council, organization, (legislative) body, assembly, house (of legislature), institution, and association.⁷⁶

Later, when the other mission-established groups were developing as national Churches, they also employed the term *Sapha Khrischak* for the national body. The term *Phra Sasanachak* denotes the Church Universal or an organized denomination, but only the Catholics use it. How much the selection of the Thai terms influences ecclesiological thought of the Thai Christians remains unsolved. The lack of a term for an organized national Church is indicative.⁷⁷

The Constitution of the CCT reflects a rather static structure. Opening new preaching places has traditionally been a strategy used for the expansion of the church. These unorganized worship groups have developed into organized congregations. The Constitution does not deal with these kinds of groups; it is only mentioned that if a group of Christians wants to become an organized local church, *khrischak tambol*, it must have at least twenty full members and have a special place to serve as the church building. Actually, There are a lot of unorganized worship groups within the CCT; the most often used term is *muad khristian*, *muad* meaning group, section, category, and platoon. The terms *salatham*, meeting hall, and *sathan prakat*, preaching place, are still sometimes used.⁷⁸

⁷⁶*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Tai*. (Constitution of the CCT) 1974, cover page, 1, 18, 30. In the sign of the CCT the names Church of Christ in Thailand and *Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* are used correspondingly. *Sathiti Khrischak nai Sapha Khrischak*. (Statistics presented to the General Assembly of the CCT) 1986. Mimeograph. In the Update Christian Directories the names Church of Christ in Thailand and *Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* are used correspondingly. Prasit Pongudom uses the term *Sapha Khrischak* in the title of his history of the CCT.

⁷⁷The Gospel Church of Thailand (in partnership with Christian and Missionary Alliance) is called *Sapha Khrischak Phra Kittikhun haeng Prathet Thai*. The Church Constitution of the Gospel Church in Thailand. 1983. Title in Thai and English, text in Thai. Preamble. *Pramualsap sasanasart lae prachaya*. 1971, 35.

⁷⁸*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 30. The terms *salatham* and *sathan prakat* are used at least in the Sixth and Seventh Districts of the CCT. (Thai speaking congregations in Bangkok and Phitsanuloke and the Chinese congregations). See the lists of names of the local churches in the Update Christian Directories. Hong-Shik Shin criticizes the CCT for artificially setting the requirements for a congregation too strict. The requirements have become a hindrance for rural expansion, because it takes long time for a village group of Christians to meet the requirements. The United Presbyterian Church in USA, the most important of the mother churches of the CCT, does not require a fixed number of members for organizing a local church. Hong-Shik Shin. 1989, 134- 136.

The Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand

The Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand says very little about the church. The underlying ecclesiological thinking, or more precisely the lack of expressed theology, has profoundly influenced the way in which the EFT has been developing. These processes will be discussed in chapter 4.3. The Constitution of the EFT has a short statement on Church.

There is a spiritual unity of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, which is the body of Christ, the Church."

This statement should be seen in the context of the controversy between the Evangelical and the Ecumenical movements. The Evangelical movements emphasize the spiritual

nature of the unity, and oppose what they see as attempts to establish an organizational unity by the World Council of Churches.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Constitution of the EFT, Section 3. According to Gaines the unity in the ecumenical movement grew rapidly between 1910 and 1948. The denominations had, however, generally left the expression of unity to independent and unofficial organizations. The World Council of Churches was to be an organization of the Churches, controlled by them. During the process of its formation the World Council of Churches became the object of bitter attack. One of the reasons for attack was the alleged overemphasis on ecclesiastical centralized unity. Gaines 1966, 327, 331-335.

4.2. THEOLOGICAL CONCERNS OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.

Many of the independent churches aim to produce their own confessional statements. Statements of Faith are available from 15 churches. Two churches referred to the Statement of the EFT, and one to the Book of Concord of the Lutheran churches. In 1999 nine churches informed that they do not have a written Confession of Faith. Eight churches informed that they confess the Apostles' Creed; one listed both the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. Four stated that they do not use any of the Ecumenical Creeds; nine churches did not answer the question.

It is difficult to conclude what is the importance of the Creeds to the independent churches. Usually they are not mentioned in the Constitutions or in the Statements of Faith. Normally, the Creeds are not used in worship services. The remark of the Hope of Bangkok Church can probably be applied on other independent churches as well: "We believe in them but do not formally use them."⁸⁰

4.2.1. The Holy Trinity

The independent churches related to the EFT confess the faith in one God who has revealed Himself in three persons. In their confessional statements, the Trinitarian doctrine is usually mentioned. This is in accordance with the Constitution of the EFT: "There is one God who reveals Himself as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁸¹ However, the Thai wording suggests that these churches are struggling with problems similar to the modalistic Monarchianism during the early church. The problem is at least partly concerning language. There is no unified terminology. The most common expression used for the persons in the Holy Trinity among the independent churches seems to be *phak*. Other expressions used include the terms *saphawa* and *laksana*. Often the prefix *Phra* is added. It is not justified to argue that the independent churches are teaching like the modalists; however, the orientation to see the persons of the Holy Trinity merely as modes of expression of God can be found not only in the independent churches but also in Thai Christianity in general.⁸²

It is not possible to conclude from the sources available when the Trinitarian terms became in use. The 1971 dictionary identifies the commonly accepted term for Trinity *Triekanuphap*. The term is coined from Pali language and contains the words *tri*

⁸⁰Questionnaire 1987,1990.

⁸¹ Constitution of the EFT, 3.2.

⁸²Term *phak* is used e.g. by the common statement of the New Life Churches, Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church. *Saphawa* is used by Makkasan Church; *laksana* at least by the EFT Constitution and the Bangchak New Life Church. On the Monarchianism: William G. Rush, The Trinitarian Controversy. Fortress Press, Philadelphia. Second printing 1983, 9-10. Alfred Adam, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte. Band 1. Die Zeit der alten Kirche. Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn. Gütersloh 1965, 168-171

(three) and *ek* (one or first). Surprisingly, it is not explained as a term, but it is only used in explaining Unitarianism. The terms used for the persons in the Holy Trinity vary. The theological dictionaries of 1971 and 1988 identify the term *bukkkhalaphap*, coined from the word *bukkhon*, which carries roughly the same meaning as person in present-day English. It was used initially, but it has not been commonly accepted. It carries quite strongly a feeling that the persons are separate, each its own entity. The term was in use when the churches related to the EFT began to develop their theological work. It is possible that for people, who had been in contact with Boonmark Kittisarn and his associates, it carried the connotation of tritheism. The term *phak* seems to be most common especially among the churches related to the EFT. The ordinary translations for *phak* are part, section, region, and term (of a school). *Saphawa* and *saphap* are translated as state, condition, plight, predicament and position; *laksana* again as character, characteristic, type, form, attribute, title in a code of law. *Saphawa* is also used in Christology for the two natures of Christ. *Laksana* may be used for the attributes of God.⁸³

Studies on the available Statements of Faith of the independent churches indicate that the Modalistic orientation could be more a matter of the past than the present. The statements on the Trinity are usually short. They are, however, sufficient to conclude that the independent churches identify themselves with Trinitarian Christianity. Wan Phetchsongkram of Romklao Church even makes the faith in the Triune God a condition *sine qua non* of the true Christian Faith. He uses term *Traiphaki* as a synonym for *Triekanuphap*.⁸⁴

Boonmark Kittisarn claims that the different teaching on the Holy Trinity was the final reason for him to break the relationship with the returning missionaries in 1946. According to him, the missionaries accused him of teaching heresy, and persuaded the CCT to excommunicate him. Boonmark Kittisarn could not accept the teaching that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to him, there is only one God, not three. (*Phra Chao mee Ong diou, mai chai mee sam Ong*).⁸⁵

It is difficult, however, to make further conclusions, because this remark is from a transcribed interview. Possibly Rev. Boonmark was thinking that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were the modes of expression of one God. On the other hand, it seems possible that he denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In 1993, I had adopted

⁸³*Pramuansap* 1971,221. *Pramuansap* 1988, 12. The Augsburg Confession was published in Thai in 1987 by the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. Draft, made by Phongsak Limthongvirutn was from 1982. That time term *phak* was already known, but not yet common. *Bukkkhalaphap* was chosen. In Augsburg Confession, *saphawa* is used as a Christological term. See: Articles 1 and 3 in *Botthalaeng satha haeng Augsburg. Augsburg Confession. First Thai Edition*. Translated by Phongsak Limthongviratn. Published by the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. Bangkok 1987.

⁸⁴ *Wan Phetchsongkram, Phra Jesu Khrist song pen Phrachao. Chud Phrakhritham sueksa*. Suun nang sue saengtham. 1998, 10-11.

⁸⁵ Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 82-83, 129. On Jesus only dispute: Hollenweger 1972, 31-32.

the conventional understanding that Boonmark Kittisarn rejected the Trinitarian doctrine when he came into contact with the United Pentecostal Church in 1959-1960. For this reason I did not pay much attention to his remark on the conflict during the immediate post-war years. It was confusing, because there was no other information available on rejecting the Trinitarian formula that early.

Further research has demonstrated that the Unitarian orientation was found among the leaders of the independent churches in the 1940s and 1950s. Boonmark Kittisarn seems to be the only one accused of expressly denying the Trinitarian doctrine. However, one of his associates, Rev. Boonmee Rungruengwong, argued in a similar way. His teaching of God was basically Unitarian. Jesus was the name for God who is both the Creator and the Savior.

“The word ‘Jesus’ does not mean God, but it is the name which is used for God who created man, who loves man, who sustains man; gives him food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe, cloth to wear; who loves man and died to atone the sins of man on the cross.”(T)⁸⁶

“Father Son and Holy Spirit are not three Gods but one God.”(T)⁸⁷

Boonmee Rungruengwong deals rather extensively on the theme “God is Spirit”. He uses this theme against idol worship. God cannot be touched like a human, an animal or a plant. Because God is Spirit, it is not possible to make an image of him.⁸⁸

The background for the emphasis of the prohibition to build any idols is the encounter with popular Buddhism, which sees certain Buddha images in temples containing sacred spiritual powers. The images themselves are objects of worship, powerful to answer prayers. Buddha images are also popularly worn as personal amulets for protection. In addition to the Buddha images, there are several kinds of personal amulets. Amulets are available in shops, but they must be brought to Buddhist monks or lay specialist for sacralization to make them effective.⁸⁹

It is not possible to conclude from the sources available how Boonmark Kittisarn and Boonmee Rungrueangwong came to their unitarian positions. They both were ordained ministers of the CCT. In 1934 the CCT adopted a constitution. In the 1974

⁸⁶*Duangjai – manut*. 1953,17. This booklet does not contain the name of Rev. Boonmee, but I was told that the booklet was written by him.

⁸⁷*Boonmee Rungruengwong, Phrawinyan Borisuth*. 2492/1949, 2-3.

⁸⁸*Boonmee Rungruengwong Phrawinyan Borisuth* 1949,1. *Boonmee Rungruengwong, Phrachao. Sathan fuek acheap phaenkarnphim. Chiang Mai* .2492/1949,12-26.

⁸⁹The technical term for purchasing amulets is to rent (chao), not to buy (sue). On different kinds of amulets: Terviel 59-81. According to Terviel, the intervention of monks is needed only for protection and beneficial power. Lay specialists often manipulate the more aggressive and dangerous types of magic. On magical powers of Buddha images: Wells 1975, 40-43. On popular beliefs concerning the main Buddha image in Wat Phrakaeu: Hiltunen 1999, 68-69.

version, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are mentioned. The Trinitarian formula is used, but in a way that Rev. Boonmee's formulation is formally not in direct conflict to it. "We seek...to fulfill our common obedience...to the glory of the one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit"⁹⁰

It seems likely that the present terminology for the Trinitarian doctrine was not yet in use when Rev. Boonmee was writing about God. Rev. Boonmee does not use the formula common at the present: "There are not three Gods, but one God who reveals himself in three persons". He simply states that "there is only one God". He does not use the term Trinity (*Triekanuphap*) nor any of the terms denoting to the persons in the Trinity (*bukkkhalaphap*, *phak*, *laksana*, *saphava* and *saphap*).⁹¹

It is most likely that Boonmark Kittisarn had the Unitarian understanding of God already when he left the CCT in the end of the 1940s. Paul Eakin does not elaborate, but only mentions his "extreme views"⁹². This could mean rejecting the Trinitarian doctrine. At least his associates taught in this way. If he was a Unitarian already then, his move to join the United Pentecostal Church becomes more understandable. He joined the United Pentecostals because their 'Jesus Only' doctrine corresponded with his own doctrinal position.

The "Jesus Only" doctrine was developed during the early years of the Pentecostal movement in the USA. It has also been called "Oneness" or "New Issue". Its roots are in the thinking of William Durham, and the controversy became public in 1912. According to Faupel, the controversy "developed in three stages: 1) as a concern to harmonize the two baptismal formulae; 2) as a focus on revelation of the name of God; and 3) as a revelation of the nature of the godhead. As the New Issue developed, a case was for the need of rebaptism."⁹³

4.2.2. The Scripture

The influence of the fundamentalist debate can be seen in the development of the Bible school controversy after the campaigns of John Sung and in the controversies after the Second World War. Fundamentalism has apparently influenced the formulation of the doctrinal statement of the EFT, yet the doctrine of verbal inspiration is not directly mentioned.

⁹⁰Constitution of the CCT 1.2.The English text according to the 1970 English version. In Thai version term *saphap* is used (*Phrachao Ong diao phu song saphap..*)

⁹¹One logical reason could be Dr. John Sung's influence, but I have not found evidences for him being an Unitarian.

⁹²Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok 1946.

⁹³Faupel, 270-306. Quote from page 281

"Every part of the Scripture is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit and is therefore the complete Word of God".⁹⁴

Almost all of the independent churches have a statement on the Bible in their confessional statements. The wording varies, but the divine inspiration, *donjai*, and completeness of the Bible as the Word of God is emphasized. It seems that the evangelical affirmations have been accepted as axioms with little theological reflection.

The way in which the Bible is used demonstrates this lack of reflection. Wan Phetchsongkram, in his book on the church, uses two sets of quotations from the Bible. According to him, the first group of references demonstrates that Jesus himself saw the significance of the church. Actually, only one of the statements is from Jesus himself. The others speak about the relationship between Jesus and the church, but most of them are from Pauline letters. The Bible references are not explained in the context where they occur in the Bible, they are taken out of the context. Sometimes a distinction is made between the statements of Jesus and the statements of the Apostles, at other times the statements of the Apostles are used as if they were the statements of Jesus himself. The method resembles what Marsden calls the view of the fundamentalist movement to see the Scripture as encyclopedic puzzle.⁹⁵

4.2.3. The Encounter with Popular Buddhism

This chapter contains a rather large presentation of Buddhism and the thoughts in the whole Protestant community. This can be seen as necessary background information for understanding the context the independent churches are living in. The purpose is to analyze the encounter between Christianity and Buddhism, not Buddhism as such.

The independent churches are mostly utilizing two kinds of approaches in presenting the Gospel to the Buddhists. Sometimes they use the inconsistencies in Buddhism as the basis of argument. Wan Phetchsongkram's presentation in his book *Talk in the Shade of the Bo Tree* is an example of this. Mostly, however, the independent churches apply the "power encounter". The power of God over all other powers becomes the central content of the evangelistic message. This approach utilizes the desire for mystical experiences, which is the driving force also for Buddhist reform movements like Dhammakaya, and the brahmanistic and animistic beliefs of the popular religion. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak summarizes:

"In a country where even non-believers believe in miracles by supernatural power, signs and wonders through the God of the Bible have partially contributed to the significant growth of this church."⁹⁶

⁹⁴Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 125-126. Constitution of the EFT 3.1.

⁹⁵*Anuson krob rob 4 pee*, 1983, 2-4. On fundamentalism: Marsden 1982, 55-62.

The main ideas of Buddhism are contained in the statements known as the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering; the truth of the origin of suffering; the truth of the extinction of suffering; and the truth of the path leading to the extinction of suffering. The fourth truth defines the Buddhist way of life and contains all the ethical teaching and practices of Buddhism. This way is called the Noble Eightfold Path.⁹⁷

Concerning the nature of Buddhism, Phra Rajavaramuni, a Buddhist monk and scholar, summarizes:

"Buddhism, however, is something to be experienced, not to be believed. It is the teaching of the practical man. Its depth can never be fathomed by argument, but one's own experience. Therefore, what is of most importance is to practice it."⁹⁸

Popular Thai Buddhism is a complex phenomenon. The term popular here refers to the actual practices of Buddhism in Thailand. The wording suggests that there is a considerable difference between the Buddhist sacred texts and the ways in which Buddhism is practiced. J. S. Tambiah speaks of a kaleidoscopic view where the religious field comprises of four sectors: the Buddhist rites, the sukhwana ritual, the cult of guardian spirits, and the rites of malevolent spirits. It is often claimed that Thai Buddhism consists of elements from Theravada Buddhism, Brahmanism, and traditional animism. B.J. Terviel argues that there are two fundamentally different approaches within the Buddhist population in Thailand. He calls them syncretistic Buddhism and compartmentalized Buddhism. In syncretistic Buddhism the animistic worldview prevails and Buddhist concepts and beliefs are incorporated in magico-animism. In compartmentalized Buddhism, Buddha's teachings are considered superior to beliefs and practices that are obviously animistic.⁹⁹

The influence of the Buddhist reform during the nineteenth century, led by King Mongkut, has a strong bearing on contemporary Thai Buddhism. This reform was described as rationalistic and puritanical, aiming to cast away non-Theravada practices. However, many non-Theravada practices are still common.¹⁰⁰

Western writers and the Thai reform Buddhists, especially in their English texts, tend to restrict the Mahayan, Brahmanistic and animistic elements only to the non-educated masses. For the reform Buddhists, this is apparently part of the apologetic approach in

⁹⁶Wan Phetchsongkram 1975, 22-31. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 35.

⁹⁷Phra Rajavaramuni 1985, 6-9. On the origins and early expansion of Buddhism see f.ex Trevor Ling, The Buddha. Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon. Penguin Books, New York. 1976.

⁹⁸Phra Rajavaramuni 1985, 9.

⁹⁹Tambiah 1970, 337-339, 367-377. Seri Phongphit, 1988, 3-4. Kirsch, 1981, 146,147. Wells 1975, 13. Maen Pongdom 1979, 318-319. Terviel, 1-4.

¹⁰⁰Wells 1975, 13. Phra Rajavaramuni 1985, 13.

promoting Buddhism for the educated Thai and foreign audience. The Western scholars have mostly studied rural communities. It should be noted, however, that horoscopes, fortunetellers and ceremonies to cast off bad luck are observed at all levels in the society, up to the highest elite. The actual beliefs and practices of the rural and educated urban populations most likely differ. One indicator could be the proliferation of applying the originally Chinese feng-shui principles in planning modern office, hotel and residential buildings in the urban areas. The tension between the rationalistic approach and the seeking of mystical experiences and contacts to supernatural beings can also be seen in the contemporary Buddhist reform movements. This became visible in the latest controversy concerning the Dhammakaya movement.¹⁰¹

According to Maen Pongudom, until the Second World War, the missionaries, with few exceptions, showed little interest in studying Buddhism. They thought that Buddhism was a man-made religion and would perish soon. They were over-confident about the superiority of Christianity and the American culture, and observed that the animistic beliefs and practices, not the Buddhist teachings, dominated the religious life of Thai people. As a consequence, the Thai Christians, the evangelists, and the ministers were not trained in the understanding of Buddhism.¹⁰²

After the Second World War, a change has taken place; attempts have been made to understand Buddhism deeper. Two of the missionaries who were in Thailand since before the Second World War wrote about Thai Buddhism. Kenneth E. Wells first published his book on Thai Buddhism in 1939. Paul A. Eakin wrote about the Christian approach to Buddhists in 1960. However, the evangelical segment felt that there were some missionaries promoting relativism. There seem to be two slightly different motivations for studying Buddhism. First, there is need to understand Buddhism deeper for more effective evangelization. John R. Davis and also Wells and Eakin, can be mentioned as an example. Secondly, there are people for whom the most important motivation is not evangelization, but rather the need to create more harmony in the society through a deeper understanding between Buddhism and Christianity. This motivation seems to have been important for organizing the Sinclair Thompson memorial lectures in 1962. Kosuke Koyama attempted to employ Buddhist terms and concepts in communicating the Gospel in the Thai context. Koyama is internationally

¹⁰¹On the role of the supernatural in Thai politics: e.g. Girling 1981, 141. Komin 1991, 181-185. The newspapers carry almost daily stories on ceremonies related to superstitious beliefs. Examples: Astrologers determined the moment of the wedding of the youngest Princess. A cabinet minister arranged a ceremony to ward off bad luck before entering his new office. On January 14, 1999 it was reported that Gen Chavalit Youngchaiyuth, former Prime Minister and that time opposition leader, submitted the censure motion against three key ministers at 12:29 p.m., an astrologically auspicious time. Nation, January 14, 1999. Page A4. On the Buddhist reform movements: Jackson 1989, 199-209. In 1998 Dhammakaya was criticized in the press and was investigated by the Department for Religious Affairs for unorthodox practices. (Chapters 2.1.3 and 3.6.4)

¹⁰²Maen Pongudom 1979, 64-67, 71-75, 121-125, 137-153.

very well known. His *Water Buffalo Theology* has been translated into Thai, but it seems to be little known outside the CCT.¹⁰³

Maen Pongudom is searching what he calls an apologetical missionary proclamation, in a similar form to that of the apologists of the early church. Actually, this means seeking points of contact between the two religions. As the experiences of the Roman Catholics demonstrate, the usage of Buddhist terms may create protests by the Buddhists and the government officials.¹⁰⁴

There appear to be two different practical approaches. The first is to keep the study of Buddhism an academic exercise. This includes lectures at the theological institutes, research papers and dissertations, and occasional seminars with Buddhist scholars. Secondly, the Sinclair Thompson memorial lectures represented an attempt to popularize the dialogue between Christians and Buddhist. The lectures, continued over several years, were received with mixed reactions. Samuel Kim criticizes opening the lectures for general public. According to him, the experience was confusing for the ordinary church members. They heard the Buddhist monk-scholars argue that Buddhism and Christianity are the same, and because of their minority status, dared not ask questions.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Davis, 9-11. Eakin sees the doctrine of Karma “as an incompleteness which finds its fulfilment in Christ” Paul A. Eakin, *Buddhism and the Christian Approach To Buddhists in Thailand*. Rung Ruang Ratana, Bangkok. 1960, 61. Wells. *Thai Buddhism*. 1975. The first printing, almost totally destroyed during the war was printed 1939. It was based on his doctoral dissertation. Kim, 127-136. According to Kim there was a radical syncretistic segment, consisting of some missionaries and second generation Christians. He does not give any names. There was also a middle group with less radical opinions, but nonetheless in danger of giving up the uniqueness of the Gospel. This group included Kosuke Koyama. On Koyama’s thinking: Kosuke Koyama, *The Waterbuffalo Theology*. Orbis Books, New York. Second printing. 1976, 78-88. (A chapter titled: Aristotelian Pepper and Buddhist Salt.) Available in Thai by the name *Sanasart lookthung*. Koyama was a Japanese missionary to the CCT. Dr. Seree Lorgunpai has compared Biblical texts to Buddhist teachings. Seree Lorgunpai, *World Lover, World Leaver. The Book of Ecclesiastes and Thai Buddhism*. University of Edinburg., 1995. Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.

An interesting comparative study has been made by Parichart Suwanbubha. Dr. Parichart, a Buddhist herself, has compared the Buddhist *Kamma* (sanskrit *Karma*) and John Calvin’s doctrine of grace. She comes to the conclusion that despite the differences, there are some similarities between grace according to Calvin’s understanding and *Kamma* in Thai Buddhism. Parichart Suwanbubha, *Grace and Kamma: A Case Study of Religiocultural Encounters in Buddhist and Protestant communities in Bangkok and its Relevant Environs, Thailand*. 1994, 277, 284. Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago. (Unpublished Doctor of Theology dissertation.

¹⁰⁴Maen Pongudom 1979, 3-4. On Buddhist reaction against Catholics: Phra Sobhon-Ganabhorn 1984.

¹⁰⁵Kim 171-175. The theological seminaries keep record of the research papers and dissertations. The extracts from the records of the Libraries of the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary and the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education reveal that there are studies made on the Buddhist – Christian encounter. Often the studies are made from the point of evangelism.

Apparently the public lessons were not situations where ideas could be openly debated. The presence of the Buddhist laity and the ordinary church members made this impossible. The Buddhist scholars were aware that they represented the vast majority, and they had the support of the entire state apparatus. It is hard to imagine that the Thai Christians, even theologians, could have challenged the Buddhist scholars in this kind of a public meeting.¹⁰⁶

Smith describes five different approaches to Buddhism. The first is called "Apologetic Approach". Inconsistencies in Buddhism form the basis of the argument to logically convince Buddhists of the Gospel. A second approach called the "Point of Contact Approach" uses Buddhism as a stepping stone to Christianity. Ethical and moral similarities are used as the basis for presenting Christ. The third is the "Shame Theology Approach" that focuses on a theological difference between shame and guilt. The evangelistic message could become "sin-shame-Savior" instead of "sin-guilt-Savior". The fourth is called the "Scratch Where It Itches" approach, meaning a practical appliance of the teachings to meet the real needs of the people. The fifth, the "Power Encounter", is based on the assumption that it is not philosophical Buddhism, but Buddhism modified by Brahmanism and animism which dominates the religious experience of the Thai people.¹⁰⁷

Spiritual powers

The question of spirits was important to the early Thai Christians. The Siam Outlook occasionally reported encounters with evil spirits; an example is a report of a trip by two colporteurs from Chiang Mai to Roi Et in the Northeast in 1921.¹⁰⁸ The spirits still occupy the minds of the contemporary Thai Christians. Personal experiences are shared, and occasionally one may hear reports of people possessed by evil spirits who have been healed after prayer. There are reports of mediums becoming Christians. The matter is discussed, but the reports are mostly unpublished.

The importance of the matter is demonstrated by the fact that evil spirits are mentioned in the Statements of Faith of several of the independent churches, for

¹⁰⁶Buddhadasa Bhikku, one of the Buddhist scholars invited to lecture at the Memorial lectures, has repeatedly emphasized the essential sameness of the two religions. His point of departure was that God is just another name for Dhamma, the teaching. See: The venerable Bhikkhu Buddhadasa Indapanno. Christianity and Buddhism. Sinclair Memorial Lecture, 1967. Published by Sublime Life Mission, Bangkok. Sine Anno, 1-27.

¹⁰⁷Alex G. Smith, The Gospel Facing Buddhist Cultures. Asian Perspective 27. Asia Theological Association. Taichung, Taiwan, ROC. 1980, 12-26.

¹⁰⁸Roderic Gillies, Missionaries to their own. Siam Outlook. Vol I. January 1922. No3, 66-67. There seems not be records of missionaries being involved in direct encounters with spirit possessions.

example the Daokhanong New Life Church. The term used is *winyan chua*. The term *phii* is rarely used.

"Satan and evil spirits do exist and are ruling this world under the restrictions made by God the highest upon them. They are using all means and ways to destroy the plans of God and the Christians."(T)¹⁰⁹

Reports on spirit possessions and exorcisms are largely unrecorded or mentioned shortly. More recordings would be needed for critical study of the whole issue. Encounters with evil spirits are a part of the reality Thai Christians are facing, and theological teaching and research should be able to provide more tools for dealing with the issue. Wan Phetchsongkram deals with the question of spirits in *Sangkhep botrian Phra Wajana* and other writings. Prasert Kusawadee, the pastor of the Suan Phlu (New Life) Church, as well as other leaders of the independent churches, are often called to pray for people thought to be possessed by evil spirits. According to casual observations, the interest in spirits among Thai Christians is growing, or more correctly, they are more able to express their concerns in this issue than they were twenty years ago.¹¹⁰

I have not been able to locate any detailed written reports on encounters with evil spirits by the leaders of the independent churches. A personal report by Rev. Suk Prachayaporn of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is illustrative. It contains same elements as the oral reports, including following common features. The possessed recognizes the Christians even if they have never met before. The possessed behaves in strange ways and has physical symptoms that require medical help, but the symptoms have not disappeared. The struggle could be long, in the case presented by Rev. Suk it continued for four days. Two methods are usually employed: the spirit is addressed directly and ordered to leave in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, or the session includes intercessions for the possessed. The person possessed or his/her family have often been participating in occult and magical practices and are afraid of cutting off relations to the occult. In connection to his report Rev. Suk raises two theological questions. First, how should Christ's victory over all powers of darkness

¹⁰⁹*Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Daokhanong* 3.5. (Constitution of the Daokhanong New Life Church). No date.

¹¹⁰*Wan Phetchsongkram, Sangkhep botrian Phra Wajana. Khrischak Romklao*. No date, 68-86. (Study of the Word of God). Prasert Kusawadee, interview May 21, 1987. An example on the importance of the matter is, that denouncing the Devil is included in the order of the baptism of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand: See: *Khumue namaskarn lae Sasanaphiti. Sapha Khrischak Lutheran nai Prathet Thai* 1996, 29-33. Anant Likhitwittayanont deals with the encounters with spiritual powers in the Lower Northeastern Region. This region, including the Nakorn Ratchasima Province is well known as an area where occult and magical practices are common. Rev. Anant is the pastor of the Sikhui Blessing Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. *Anant Likhitwittayanont, Karn prakat Khao prasert nai Phak Esarn ton lang*. Lutheran Institute of Theological Education 1999. Unpublished Bachelor of Theology research paper.

be interpreted when the spirits seem to be able to resist God's Word? Secondly, can evil spirits possess a Christian?¹¹¹

Rev. Suk wonders whether the illustration, favored by missionaries, of Satan as a snake which head has been cut off conveys the right message in a situation where the spirits seem to be able resist. However, it is crucial to emphasize that as Christ has risen from death, he already has won all the powers of Darkness. There is an inherent danger to see the exorcism in a Manichean way – as a battle between darkness and light in which the outcome depends on the competence of the exorcists. The emphasis turns then to the right techniques. The second problem connected to encounters with evil spirits is the question of a Christian becoming possessed. There are people who emphatically state that a Christian can not be possessed. If somebody has problems with the spirits, it only demonstrates that this person has not yet really born again; his faith is simply fake. Another possibility I find a theologically more sound solution could be to distinguish between actual possession (*phii khau*), and being bothered by the spirits (*phii ma robkhuan*). It is possible that spirits can bother anyone, but being possessed requires some kind of submitting to them. Analogically, there is always the danger of falling into temptation, but continuous living in sin requires conscious submittal.

In the Thai Bible, the terminology of the cult of guardian spirits (*thep, thewada*) is employed for evil spirits in several passages. In Buddhist or secular literature the term *thep* is sometimes translated as angel. In the Thai Bible the term for an angel is a coined word, *thut sawan*, literally “the ambassador of heaven”. If more studies are not made in this field, there is a danger that the cosmology of popular Buddhism will influence the understandings of the Thai Christians too much. Employing the guardian spirit terminology for the spiritual powers in Ephesians is problematic. According to the Thai beliefs, the guardian spirits are benevolent, or at least they can be manipulated. This is not the case in Ephesians. The powers described there are malevolent. It should be noted that the terminology of malevolent spirits was not employed in the Thai Bible.¹¹²

¹¹¹Suk Prachayaporn, The Encounter between Buddhism and Christianity in Thailand. Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology. Oslo.1998, 63.(Unpublished Master of Theology thesis) Rev. Suk serves as the Director of the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education since 1999. The experience with the demon possessed was frustrating. “Suddenly these words came to my mind: ”But this kind does not go out except by prayers and fasting”. Then I told the people who were praying for the woman not to command the demon, but let us pray directly to God. After praying for another hour, it was 2.00 AM, I gathered people together and said to them. “We will close our prayer session for tonight and will be praying again in the morning”. While I was saying the benediction, and at the point saying ‘Amen’, the woman shock and fell down to the ground. After a minute, she woke up and the demon had left her.” It is not mentioned in the written report that the woman had been subjected to occult practices.

¹¹²Example from the Bible: Ephesians 6:11-13. On cosmology of the popular Buddhism and the cult of the guardian spirits: Tambiah 32-52, 263-284. There has been interest in some Charismatic circles on the “territorial spirits”. It is difficult to conclude how much this discussion has influenced the Thai Christians. For Thai Christians the spirits are not a new issue. On the territorial spirits: C. Peter Wagner. Warfare Prayer. Monarch Publications Ltd. Speldhurst, Kent, TN3 0NP UK. 1992, 11-26.

The discussion on the spirits has been concentrating on the contemporary situation in Thailand. I have not yet come across any attempts to relate the experiences in Thailand to the Early Church teachings, and practices or teachings during the Reformation Era. This is not in any sense the first time Christians have to struggle with the spiritual powers. History and also contemporary experiences in other parts of the World should be studied in order to see the whole issue in a wider context.

4.2.4. The Church

The purpose of this section is to describe, analyze and classify the ecclesiological thought about the Church among the independent churches in Thailand. It has been difficult to determine from the Thai sources when the term *khrischak* denotes a local church and when the Church Universal.

Taking into consideration the strong impact of the American evangelicalism on Thai Christianity, one would expect to find traces of individualism and an underestimation of the soteriological significance of the church among the independent churches. To some extent this is true, as can be observed from the statements of faith in their constitutions. These statements are often short and say little about the significance of the church. In addition, the paragraphs in the constitutions of the independent churches discussing membership are long and detailed, but very little is said about the nature of the church. The Romklao Church is an exception: it has a large doctrinal statement on the church.

According to the first Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, a local church applying for membership in the EFT must submit a photograph of the meeting place, as well as a copy of the statement of faith, and the constitution of the church.¹¹³ This means that a confession of faith, formal organization and regular worship are regarded as the constituent factors for a church.

The definition implied in the Constitution of the EFT seems to be sufficient for the independent churches. This definition is used for a local church. The independent

Wagner began emphasize the territorial spirits around 1980. Others with similar emphases include Larry Lea and John Wimber. Wagner uses examples from the USA and Argentina. According to Wagner, there are three levels of spiritual warfare: Ground level spiritual warfare is the most common variety found in the NT. Occult level spiritual warfare concerns shamans, New Age channelers, occult practitioners, witches and warlocks, satanist priests, fortunetellers and the like. Strategic-level spiritual warfare is done with territorial spirits, “challenging of the principalities and powers, and the proclamation of the gospel not only to the people but to the spiritual jailers who held the people captive.”

¹¹³Nothing was said about the required number of church members. According to the 1997 regulations there must be at least 50 baptized full members in a church applying membership as an independent church Constitution of the EFT, Section 4. Constitution of the EFT (1998), Section 4. (EFT) Regulations for accepting members: Independent churches.

churches developing as larger bodies with daughter churches or several places of worship have not yet developed a clear understanding of themselves.

The statements of faith of the independent churches usually have short statements about the church. The Muang Thai Church has the following statement:

"We believe that the church is the people of God composed of all those who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. The Church is Christ's body; it is visible in the world whenever believers, in obedience of faith, hear the Word, receive the sacraments – communion and baptism–, and live as disciples."¹¹⁴

The Daokhanong New Life Church and the Bangkhuntian New Life Church have the following statement:

"3.8. The Church Universal consists of the Christians of all ages from the whole world. It is the Body of Christ.
3.9. The local church is a church at a specific location, consisting of believers who arrange regular meeting and worship." (T)¹¹⁵

The Hope of Bangkok Church is a charismatic cell group (central) church. However, its statement about the church is similar to the Evangelical Free Churches and the New Life Churches:

"We believe that the Church Universal consists of people of all ages from the whole world who believe and trust in Christ. Together they are the Body of Christ, but in the different locations, there are local churches consisting of believers coming together and arranging meeting for worship, for listening the teaching of the Word, for fellowship, for witnessing, for celebrating the Holy Communion and for prayer. Normally a Christian must be a member of a local church." (T)¹¹⁶

The church is seen as the gathering of believers. The local church is visible as the worshipping community. The main concern has been to build a local church that would comprise of true Christians conducting a holy life. Interest has been in the holiness of individual Christians; few documents are available on theological reflections on the soteriological significance or the nature of the church.

The independent churches, excluding the Romklao Church, operate within the theological framework of the statement of faith of the EFT. It is not conclusive whether the statement of the EFT has been used as a model. All of these statements are well within the theological framework of the American Evangelicalism, where the main interest is on individual experience and the soteriological significance of the church is very limited.

¹¹⁴Muang Thai Church. 1984, 5.

¹¹⁵*Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Daokhanong 3. Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Bangkhuntian.1987.(Constitution of the Bangkhuntian New Life Church).*

¹¹⁶*Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep* 1986, 5.

Building the church of true and holy Christians

Examples from the early years of the Protestant work in Thailand indicate that teachings about baptism and holiness were of central interest for missionaries and Thai Christians. The question of the holiness of both the Christians and the church leaders was an important part of the controversy that led to the establishment of the first independent churches. The same concern can be found in the teachings of the later independent churches. The Pentecostal movement brought the teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the discussion by insisting that speaking in tongues is the sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The process of restoring the church leaders who had remained silent during the Second World War back into their leadership positions resembles the Novatian controversy during the Early Church. Individuals touched by the pre-war revival had kept the Church of Christ in Thailand functioning during the war years; they, especially Boonmark Kittisarn, reacted against the restoration. Generally, the returning missionaries were in favor of restoration.¹¹⁷

It is often said that a strong legalistic element exists in the Thai Christianity. This is claimed to be the influence of Buddhism. A teaching of popular Buddhism is often quoted: "If you do good deeds, you will receive good results. If you do bad deeds, you will receive bad results." The roots of the legalism can also be traced back to the teachings of early missionaries. The views of D.B. Bradley about sinless perfection were mentioned in the section 2.2. Between 1880-1900, the Presbyterian missionaries hoped to establish a "clean church" in Phetchaburi. Swanson argues concerning the Presbyterians in Northern Thailand:

"Trapped in a Presbyterian legalism, the members of the Laos Mission failed to understand the biblical freedom of expression of faith ... The Laos Mission appointed itself the protector of the purity of the church in a way strikingly similar to Judaizers, those who insisted on preserving the Jewish purity of the Christian sect."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok, 1946, 2,3. Boonmark Kittisarn 1979, 82,126. Paul A. Eakin and Boonmark Kittisarn were at odds. According to his interview, Boonmark resigned from his official positions, but returned as a member, because he felt that the CCT was still his home. A short introduction to the Novatian and Donatist divisions: Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity. Vol. I. Beginnings to 1500. Harper & Row, New York. Revised Edition 1975, 137-139.

¹¹⁸Swanson 1984, 160, 161. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was translated in the early years. It has been an influential book in the Christian community, used in instruction for baptism. There is a clear resemblance between the teaching of Ten Commandment and sin in the Catechism, and the popular teaching in the contemporary Christian community. On events in Phetchaburi: Herbert R. Swanson, Towards a Clean Church. A Case Study in 19th Century Thai Church History. Office of History. Church of Christ in Thailand. 1991.

In addition, it is possible to find connections between most of the mission agencies working in Thailand and the holiness movements in America. Some, like the Christian and Missionary Alliance, are actually part of them; others, like the Pentecostal movement, have their roots in those movements.¹¹⁹

In the constitutions of the independent churches, holiness is not expressed in theological terms; rather, emphasis is placed on the virtuous conduct of the members, and instructions on practicing the church discipline are given. Holiness is seen as a means for effective growth of the church. The sinful conduct of the members is seen as a hindrance for evangelism, and therefore the members have to be instructed.

Romklao Church: The church as the representative of Christ

Two areas can be distinguished where the Romklao Church, led by Wan Phetchsongkram, brought forth new thoughts. The first is the soteriological significance of the Church; the second is the organization and ministries and the offices of the Church.¹²⁰

The fourth anniversary yearbook of the Romklao Church, published in 1983, can be seen as the theological basis of the Romklao Church. It is apparently written by Rev. Wan, since the chapter on the significance of the church is an almost word by word quotation from his book about the church, *Khrischak khrob wongchon*. A clear distinction between the statements concerning the Church Universal and a specific local congregation is not obvious because only the term *khrischak* is used. It is possible that statements on the soteriological significance of the church mostly concern the Church Universal. The Romklao Church is not considered the only church, but very little is said about the others. The focus is on building the Romklao Church; the outside world is of secondary interest. The later anniversary publications contain more information on the functions of the church. In the 1990s the Romklao Church has prepared a document containing the Statement of Faith, constitution and various policies and proceeds.¹²¹

According to the fourth anniversary yearbook, the form of the church can be found in the Old Testament. The divine plan was implemented in the calling of Abraham. It

¹¹⁹On the roots of the Pentecostal movement: Hollenweger 1972, 21.

¹²⁰On Bangkok Urban Strategy see Hill 1982. Hill still listed Romklao Church as a Baptist Church. Hill 1982, 86, 96.

¹²¹*Anuson khrob rob 4 pee*, 1983. Wan Phetchsongkram, *Khrischak khrob wongchon*. *Khrischak Romklao*. Sine Anno. 155 pages. The name of the book is difficult to translate. The word *wongchon* means electric circuit. These two books have been written about the same time. The former can be seen as a kind of constitution of Romklao Church. It contains guidelines for discipleship training, cell groups and other activities. The new constitution and policy document: *Lakkarn lae nayobai Khrischak Romklao*. Sine anno. (c. 1995)

meant the birth of the nation of Israel. Spiritually, the fruit was the church. God calls the sinners to leave their relatives and siblings in order to become a holy nation and God's chosen people. Christ has given the church the duty and the authority to lead people to salvation. If the church neglects its duty and responsibility, the people in the world will perish. If the church fulfills its duty, the world will be saved. Jesus Christ came to the world to establish the church. He has delegated his entire ministry to the church and made the church his representative. Christ himself is present in the church and is closely working with the church through the Holy Spirit.¹²²

Wan Phetchsongkram links salvation and the church closely together. In his book on baptism in the Holy Spirit, he defines it as the gift God gives through faith in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, and the cleansing of the heart. God builds the sinner anew through the Holy Spirit. Salvation is only in Jesus Christ. It means escape from judgment.¹²³

In the fourth anniversary yearbook, ten references to the Bible underline the significance Jesus Christ himself gave to the Church Universal. They are translated here to represent the way the Bible is used as an "encyclopedic puzzle", with the verses taken out of the context.

1. The Lord Jesus established the church and is the owner, *chaokhong*, of the church. Lord has said, "On this rock I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18).
2. The Lord Jesus bought the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
3. The Lord Jesus bought the church with a high price (1Cor 6:20).
4. The Lord Jesus loved the church and gave himself up for it (Eph 5:25).
5. The Lord Jesus is the Savior of the church (Eph 5:23).
6. The Lord Jesus made the church holy, *borisuth*, by cleansing it with the water and the word, so that his church might be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:26,27).
7. The Lord Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church (Eph 5:29).
8. The Lord Jesus is the head, *phra pramook*, of the church (Eph 1:22). Lord Jesus is the head, *sisa*, of the church (Eph 5:23, Col 1:18).
9. The Lord Jesus spoke about husband and wife being one flesh, referring to himself being one with the church (Eph 5:30-32).
10. God the Father shall receive the glory in the church and in Jesus Christ (Eph 3:21)."¹²⁴ (T)

According to the yearbook, these Bible passages clearly show that Jesus saw the significance of the church. Jesus did not establish an organization or an institution. He died for the church, not for an organization or an institution. If the church members would understand the plan of Jesus Christ, they would love the church and be ready to

¹²²Anuson khrob rob 4 pee, 1983, 2.

¹²³Wan Phetchsongkram, *Baptisma nai Phra Winyan Borisuth*. Krischak Romkla. Sine Anno, 13. (Baptism in the Holy Spirit).

¹²⁴Anuson khrob rob 4 pee, 1983, 2-3. The quotation in the English translation is according to the Revised Standard Version.

die for the church. The devil is trying to oppose the establishment of the church either directly, using the people of the world, or indirectly, using the Christians.¹²⁵

Another set of Bible references is used to further underline the importance of the church in God's plan.

1. The church is the household of living God (1Tim 3:15).
2. The church is the pillar and the foundation of the truth (1Tim 3:15).
3. The church is the body of Christ, the fullness of him who fills all things everywhere (Eph 1:23).
4. The church is the seven lampstands (Rev 1:20).
5. The church is the heir of all things (Eph 1:3-22).
6. The church is the church of the saints, *thammikachon* (1Cor 14:33).
7. God wants to let the angelic rulers and authorities to know his manifold wisdom through the church (Eph 3:10).
8. The Lord Jesus delegated all his authority in heaven and in the world to the church (Mt 16:19, 18:17,18, John 20:21-23, 1Cor 11:16, 5:2,13).
9. The Lord Jesus gave the power and the spiritual gifts to the church so that it could be a tool for service (1Cor 12:4-11).¹²⁶ (T)

The aspects mentioned above reveal the importance of the Church Universal concerning God, the church itself, and the world. Six points are presented as a summary to explain the purpose of the establishment of the church.

1. The Church is the body of Christ which is still in the world. The Lord is working through the body, the Church. This means that each member has its own duties according to the positions and to the gifts.
2. The Lord Jesus is the Savior of the world. He reveals himself and helps the world every day through the Church. There are every day people who receive the salvation.
3. The Lord Jesus expresses love and mercy to the world, and helps people in the world in different ways through the Church.
4. The Lord Jesus uses the Church as a tool in proclamation, in preaching, in teaching and in supporting the life in different ways.
5. The Lord Jesus collects the people of the world to be one in the Church, and rules the Church as its head.
6. The Lord Jesus sacrifices, suffers and gives his life for the world every day through his body, the Church.¹²⁷ (T)

The Romklao Church has detached itself quite far away from the traditional evangelical standpoints. The understandings presented by the Romklao Church can be seen as a reaction against the Thai Christian community shaped by the American

¹²⁵Ibid., 3.

¹²⁶Ibid., 3-4.

¹²⁷Ibid., 4.

evangelicalism, and as a serious attempt to develop an understanding about the theological significance of the Church.

For the Romklao Church, the church has a very central soteriological significance. It is the representative of Christ in the world. The church even has a role in the suffering of Christ for the world. Some of the statements can be interpreted to mean that the church is the incarnation of Christ. The usage of two terms, to "be present", *sathit yu*, and to "live", *prachon yu*, while speaking about the presence of Christ in the church, seems to point to this direction. The first one is normally used in the meaning of the spiritual presence. The noun *prachon* in the second combination means age, in the court language. It is also used for death, *sin prachon*. In Christian usage, the term is also used for Christ's resurrection, *khuen prachon*. The connotation of the term is not a spiritual presence, but a concrete life.

Possibly the understanding on monarchy has some influence on Rev. Wan's thought on the church. Traditionally, authority emanated from the king to the bureaucracy. Analogically, as a high-ranking government official acts in the name of the king, the church represents Christ in the world.¹²⁸

It seems that in emphasizing the soteriological significance of the church, the Romklao Church has come close to the Roman Catholic teaching about the Church. An interesting comparison can be made to the Lumen Gentium-decree of the Second Council of Vatican. Wan Phetchsongkram actually speaks favorably on the Roman Catholics. He maintains that the Pope, due to his position, has received adoration belonging only to God, but simultaneously criticizes the Reformation for eradicating the honoring of the spiritual leaders. In his book on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Wan Phetchsongkram refers to charismatic groups within the Roman Catholic Church.¹²⁹

¹²⁸On the Monarchy and the government officials e.g.: Morell and Chai-anan Samudavijja 1982, 19-25. The government officials are still at present called *khatchakarn*, servants of the crown.

¹²⁹*Khrischak khrob wongchon*, 139. *Baptisma nai Phra Winyan Borisuth*, 2.

Quotes from the Lumen Gentium - decree:

"Already from the beginning of the world the foreshadowing of the Church took place."

"Christ the Mediator, established and ceaselessly sustains here on earth His Holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible structure."

"The Church is called to follow the same path in communicating to man the fruits of salvation".

"Bishops in eminent and visible way undertake Christ's own role as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person." Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The Documents of Vatican II. All sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963-1965. Transl. from Latin. Association Press. New Century Publishers Inc. New Jersey, USA. 1966, 15, 22, 23, 42. The Documents of the Second Vatican Council have been translated into Thai. Kärkkäinen has studied the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Pentecostal movement. According to him, there is remarkable consensus about the foundational issue of *koinonia* in the spirit. Divergences had to do with three basic issues, the first being the most substantial: sacraments, local vs. universal church relationship (including relationships between local churches), and charismatic vs. hierarchical structure of the Church. See: Kärkkäinen, 1998, 328-329.

The Romklao Church can be seen as an attempt to give the church the first priority. Further, it can be seen as a reaction against the prominence of the parachurch organizations. During the first decades of the Protestant ministry in Thailand, the Christian institutions in practice often were emphasized the most. After the Second World War, several new parachurch organizations have entered Thailand, and similar national organizations have been established.

Autonomy of the local church

The immediate years after the Second World War were a time for restoration in the churches in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. After that began a slow expansion. For the CCT, the emphasis was on strengthening the existing body. The new mission agencies were struggling to begin their work.

The expansion of the church has become an important theme in the Protestant community after 1970. The search for new strategies has mostly been pragmatic, with few theological reflections. The mother church - daughter church concept has become a popular pattern for expansion. In this model, the opening of new local churches is the concern of the strong old local churches, not of the denominational bodies. The local churches decide by themselves where new congregations should be opened. This has strengthened their role.¹³⁰

The first independent churches were autonomous bodies, loosely connected with each other. The main interest was in the local body; not much thought was given to expansion. The emphasis seems to have been on the autonomy of the local congregation. Apparently co-operation between the independent churches was discussed, and Boonmark Kittisarn's *Sahaphan* was an attempt to organize co-operation between the independent churches, but an officially recognized organization did not exist prior to the organizing the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand in 1969.

Emphasis on the autonomy of the local congregations helped Boonmark Kittisarn maintain a close co-operation with the Finnish Pentecostals in the 1950s. He traveled in different parts of the country on his own and with the missionaries. The groups of Christians born as results of these trips were not connected to the Bangkok Church, where Boonmark Kittisarn was the pastor. Instead, those groups remained autonomous. The Samchuk Church in Suphanburi can be mentioned as an example.¹³¹

¹³⁰Smith 1982, 282 mentions the mother church - daughter church model as one possible way to multiply churches.

¹³¹The Samchuk Church was begun around 1955 by the initiative of the Bangkok Church. Mrs. Phirun

What is said about the Bangkok Church can be applied to most of the Evangelical Free Churches of this study. The daughter churches have born spontaneously. The relationship between the mother church and the daughter churches is not defined. Theologically, this means that the local church is seen as a visible, autonomous gathering of the believers. The Church Universal exists as the spiritual Body of Christ. No visible organization between the local churches is necessary.

In the New Life Churches, the pattern of expansion began more for practical than for theological reasons. However, the theologically motivated principle of expansion is central in their constitutions. The role of the members in evangelism is emphasized. In 1981, the Sathupradit Church prepared a document containing a short history, a plan of action, and the organization of the church. Expansion by division was not mentioned as a policy, though it was practiced. The Sathupradit Church itself was established by members of the Suan Phlu Church and the Makkasan Church.¹³²

The Daokhanong New Life Church was accepted as the member of the EFT in 1983. The constitution of the church is probably from that year. Expansion by division is mentioned in the constitution.

"2.2. To promote and support in establishing new churches through dividing from the mother church (the Daokhanong New Life Church) when there is enough strength, and to give support to the new church to be autonomous, *ekhathet*, by being able to govern and support itself."(T)

The Bangkhuntian New Life Church, established by the Daokhanong New Life Church in 1982, adopted its constitution in January 1987. The constitution is similar to that of the Daokhanong New Life Church, but one important addition was made. It was stated that the church is affiliated, *sangkad yu*, to the group of the New Life Churches, registered by the EFT and that it is forbidden to break the affiliation.¹³³

The New Life Churches attempt to maintain a balance between the autonomy of a local church and the establishment of a denomination. This is done by emphasizing the

Rattanabutr, daughter of Boonmark Kittisarn was a headteacher of the school of the church. By 1986, the Samchuk Church had opened five daughter churches, and 58 persons were baptized during 1985. The number of people attending the Sunday worship service was approximately 25 persons. By 1987 the church had connections to several mission organizations. The Romklao Church was visiting the church regularly. No connections to the Bangkok Church were reported. Survey on church planting. EFT, 1986. Author's notes in the EFT seminar on church planting May 19, 1987. The Samchuk Church was invited to present the strategies used in church planting.

¹³²Merry, 1977, 2. *Prawat yo khong Khrischak Sathupradit. Paomai Khrischak*. (Short history of Sathupradit Church. Plan of action of the church). 1981. *Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Bangkhuntian*. 1987, 1.

¹³³*Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Daokhanong. Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Bangkhuntian*, 1987, 1. *Prawat Khwampenma khong Khrischak Chivit Mai Bangkhuntian*. 1987. (History of the Bangkhuntian New Life Church. Mimeograph).

autonomy of the local church in forming its constitution. At the same time, unity within the group is also emphasized. The New Life Churches originally operated within the concept of the autonomous local church. This principle is still kept, but the co-operation with the other New Life Churches is becoming more important and official. The idea of the autonomous local church has slowed down the development of the denominational structures but has not made it impossible. Around 1987, discussions on organizing the group as a denomination were held; finally these plans were implemented in 1994 when the New Life Group *Klum Khrischak Chivit Mai* was officially established.¹³⁴ (Chapter 3.4.2)

The development of the group of the New Life Churches can be seen in the context of the developments in the Protestant community. The trend towards organizing national bodies for the mission-established local churches can be observed in the community related to the EFT. The degree of the integrity of the different groups varies, but the principle of the autonomy of the local church is no longer as prominent as it was previously.

4.2.5. Defining the membership in the Church: Faith, regeneration, baptism, and Spirit filled life

The constitutions of the independent churches often contain long and detailed lists of the duties of the members. As was stated in Chapter 4.2.4, holiness is presented not as a theological concept but in practical arrangements. This indicates that Christian life is seen as life in a community. A person can not become a Christian without personal experience, and in the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches, receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit without personal experience. This, however, always happens in the context of the church. The experiences are not understood only as personal experiences, there must be witnesses to verify that the experiences have actually taken place.

Christian life is understood to be life in a community. For the independent churches, this is also a very practical question: in order to survive, they need committed and faithful members. Since everything is understood to take place in the context of the church, it is justified to discuss the questions concerning salvation in connection to being a member in the church.

The Christians in Thailand live as a minority in a situation, which allows growth, but simultaneously discourages it. There are people with various relationships to the church: occasional visitors; people attending the church regularly; people who have made a public profession of faith, and are preparing for baptism; and the baptized membership with a varying level of experience and maturity. In addition to adults, there are the children of the members. The Church of Christ in Thailand (with the exception of some of its Districts) and the member organizations of the EFT that

¹³⁴Seth Chansong, interview May 19,1987. *Klum Khrischak Chivit Mai* 1996.

belong to the category of conciliar Evangelicals (Appendix 3), practice infant baptism as well. The others generally practice only adult baptism.

In this situation, the definition of membership becomes topical. The terms used are "the Christian", *khristian*, "the believer", *phu chuea*, and "the member", *samachik*. The central questions are: who is a Christian, how one becomes a Christian, and what the various membership categories are.

Membership categories

According to the Constitution of the CCT and the constitutions of most of the independent churches, becoming a member of the church is seen as a process with different stages. Baptism is the requirement for full membership, *samachik somboon*. The term *samachik samrong* is employed for persons associated with the church without a full membership. As an adjective the term *samrong* has the meaning of "reserved for use instead of, kept as a second choice and provided for in anticipation of".

Different definitions are given to the associate members, *samachik samrong*. In the Constitution of the CCT, this term denotes persons who have received infant baptism but have not yet become full members, and catechumens who have not yet been baptized. The Constitution does not state how a baptized associate member becomes full member. Apparently, the confirmation is needed.¹³⁵

In several independent churches, the associate members are new believers, not yet baptized, or members who have lost their status as full members as a disciplinary action. The children of the members can sometimes also be counted in this category.¹³⁶ The public profession of faith is important in the life of the independent churches. The term for this is *rap chuea*, literally to receive faith. The new people are incorporated into the church after they have "received the faith".

The independent churches emphasize the importance of being a faithful member of one's church. This is a practical question as well, for the independent churches can not depend on members ready to move from one church to another. This can be seen as a reaction against transferring membership, which has been common since the late 1950s.¹³⁷

¹³⁵*Thammanoon haeng Khristchak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.73. The Book of the occasional services of the CCT has an order for confirmation. The meaning of this order is to give permission to participate in the Holy Communion. *Khumue sasana phiti. Samnakphim Suriyaban, Krungthep*. 1977, 32-34.

¹³⁶Example: *Thammanoon haeng Khristchak Chivit Mai Daokhanong*, 4.1, 4.4.

¹³⁷Examples : *Khristchak Khwamwang Krungthep* 1985, 5. In the Romklao Church the cell groups are presented as a method in the pastoral care of the members; without cell groups the members may disappear. *Wan Phetchsongkram, Khristchak khrob wongchon*, 100-103.

In the Romkiao Church, being a Christian is defined through experiences. Being a Christian begins by receiving God. God then makes a new creation and dwells in the person receiving him. That makes sinners new persons; they have become good (*khon dee*), or justified people (*khon chobtham*). The terms believer and Christian are understood as synonyms. The second part of being a Christian consists of following the teachings of Jesus.¹³⁸

Receiving baptism is a part of following Jesus, but it does not have any meaning for salvation. Actually, for Wan Phetchsongkram, the principal meaning of baptism is the experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, *baptisma nai Phra Winyan Borisooth*.¹³⁹

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience distinct from receiving God or receiving salvation. When a believer receives salvation, the Holy Spirit takes a dwelling in the believer as the sign of the new birth. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that follows later; after that, new manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit may occur. According to Wan Phetchsongkram, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not only a blessing from God, but also the absolute prerequisite for receiving other spiritual gifts. Speaking in tongues is the sign of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁰

Wan Phetchsongkram uses the term experience, *prasopkarn*, as the key word, and then builds his theological thought around this concept. Being a Christian means to have experiences with God. He uses this term in a way similar to some of the American Evangelical leaders. Receiving God and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit are experiences; being a Christian evolves around these two experiences. Because baptism is not understood as an experience, it is left without meaning for salvation.¹⁴¹

In the Romkiao Church, the terms full member and associate member are not employed, but a division into categories is visible. The membership categories can be as the believers, and the believers who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Those who have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit form the actual full membership of the church. The decisive factor seems not be baptism, but the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is required for full membership, but its meaning is very vague. It seems possible that also believers who have not been baptized may receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

¹³⁸*Wan Phetchsongkram, Pen phavan yangrai. Khrischak Romkiao. 52-55. (How to be a witness). Latest 1988.*

¹³⁹Wan Phetchsongkram, *Baptisma nai Phra Winyan Borisooth*, 44-45.

¹⁴⁰*Wan Phetchsongkram, Khongprathan fai Phra Winyan. Khrischak Romkiao. 2. (Gifts of the Spirit). Wan Phetchsongkram, Baptisma nai Phra Winyan Borisooth, 46-49.*

¹⁴¹Example: John R. Mott called a person who had experience with God a Christian. See Ahonen 1983, 34, 35, 55-57.

Baptism

Baptism has been a much-debated issue in the Christian community in Thailand. The problems related to baptism are the mode of baptism, the validity of infant baptism, the authority to administer baptism, and the name in which baptism should be administered. At least in the Thai context, the last question is related to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Further, there is the question of the meaning of baptism.¹⁴²

Re-baptisms in the Protestant community

The first recorded case of a re-baptism is from the very first years of the protestant work. Rev. Karl Gützlaff, the first resident missionary in Thailand (1828-1831) baptized the first convert, Boon Tee, a man of Chinese descent. After Gützlaff left Thailand, Boon Tee became the chief assistant to Rev. Taylor Jones of the Baptists, who re-baptized him by immersion in 1833.¹⁴³ This early incident highlights the practice of re-baptisms, which is still an issue in the contemporary Christian community.

An extreme example of re-baptisms is Rev. Boonmark Kittisarn. He was born in a Buddhist family, and was baptized by sprinkling in a Presbyterian Church in Phitsanuloke as a young man in 1915. Later, he was baptized by immersion in the name of the Holy Trinity in the Nakorn Pathom province in the Central Thailand. This probably took place just prior to the Second World War, because during the war he started to baptize by immersion. The third baptism took place in 1959 during his visit to America. There he was in contact with the United Pentecostal Church and their "Jesus only"-doctrine, according to which only the baptism administered in the name of Jesus is valid. The fourth baptism was in the seventies when he was baptized by the Adventists, who did not accept him as a member unless he agreed to be baptized by them. Rev. Boonmark was reluctant to do so but finally complied. He did not consider the re-baptisms wrong, only unnecessary. It is possible to find other people who been baptized several times.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴²An example from the CCT: The Maitrichit Church withdrew from the Seventh District in 1953, over the conflict on the mode of baptism. In 1959 it rejoined the CCT in order to establish the new Twelfth District. Smith 1982, 231.

¹⁴³Wells 1958, 5-7. Smith 1982, 16, 19.

¹⁴⁴Boonmark Kittisarn, Interview by Chajan Hiranphan 1979, 19, 20, 21, 48, 49, 78. Interview with Charan Rattanabutr May 16, 1987. Interview with Verner Raassina, December 17, 1988. Eakin, Survey Report for Bangkok 1946, 2-3. Eakin does not mention directly the immersion, but it is implied. He accuses Boonmark for extreme views."For two years he has been led to leave the church and establish a new 'true church'". Eakin also reports that after the War, Dutch Pentecostal soldiers were in contact with Boonmark, and speaking in tongues was made a prominent feature of the worship of Boonmark's

The example of John Sung probably had some bearing on Boonmark Kittisarn. John Sung was re-baptized by immersion in Hong Kong on May 1, 1932. The act itself seems to have been rather spontaneous, and after his own baptism he in the same occasion went on baptizing the other candidates. The sources available do not explain the reasons for being re-baptized, neither it is told whether he later practiced immersion during his campaigns.¹⁴⁵

Between the years 1958-1973, there were three movements in which re-baptisms became a central phenomenon. There was also a fourth movement, the activities of the Church of God of Prophecy from 1977 to 1984, but the information regarding it is difficult to find. Individual re-baptisms have taken place all the time, but in the 1980s re-baptisms have not been as prominent a feature as earlier.

The first recorded case of a larger group being re-baptized is the organizing of the first Pentecostal congregations by the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries (Finnish Free Foreign Mission) in Chiang Rai in Northern Thailand in 1958. These congregations were born after a revival within the Presbyterian (CCT) congregations there. Christians joining the revival were re-baptized and organized into five Pentecostal congregations. Their combined membership was close to 400 in the beginning. The baptism given by the CCT was not considered to be a proper baptism. Therefore, the "biblical water baptism", adult immersion, was introduced.¹⁴⁶

The second movement was the establishment of the United Pentecostal Church in the early 1960s. The United Pentecostal Church grew mainly through transfers, and people baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity were, as a rule, re-baptized in the name of Jesus. Smith states that 800 baptisms were administered within one year, and the church had more than a thousand members at the highest. According to Smith, the number of members has been on the decrease, from 700 in 1970 to 300 in 1978. Reliable statistical accounts are lacking. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 3.2.1, the United Pentecostal church had in the end of the 1990s at least 2,500 –5000 members.¹⁴⁷

If most of the growth of the United Pentecostal Church in the early years was transfer growth, as is claimed, then most of the baptisms were actually re-baptisms. The

church. In 1979, Rev. Verner Raassina and Mrs Ulla Raassina told me about people been baptized three times. Those were people been baptized as children in the CCT. Later they were baptized by Finnish Pentecostals by immersion. Still later they were baptized in the name of Jesus by the United Pentecostal Church. The Raassinans were referring to incidents in Chiang Rai in 1958 -1961.

¹⁴⁵Lyll 1954, 95.

¹⁴⁶Ruohomäki 1989, 76, 79-82, 87, 89-91, 106. Vaurula - Ontermä 1988, 108-115, 159. The number of 400 re-baptisms is author's estimation based on information given by Ruohomäki.

¹⁴⁷Smith 1982, 252, 253. Ruohomäki 1989, 105.

number of re-baptisms by the United Pentecostal Church between 1959 and 1970 could thus be from 700 to 1000.

The third movement was the Church of Christ (non-instrumental). Its workers considered themselves the only true representatives of the biblical faith. The group has been growing largely due to transfers from other churches. In 1973, the reported membership was 1221. It can be estimated that by 1973, approximately 800 members transferred from other churches to the Church of Christ and were re-baptized. Since 1979, the Church of Christ has not been expanding its Thai work; by that year, the membership was reduced to 900.¹⁴⁸

Re-baptisms in these three movements between the years 1958-1973 can be estimated as follows:

Pentecostals in Chiang Rai	400
United Pentecostal Church	800
Church of Christ (non-instrum.)	<u>800</u>
	2,000

Including the re-baptisms in connection to other transfers, the total number of re-baptisms between those years can be estimated to have reached 2500. Between 1960 and 1973, the combined membership of the Protestant churches grew from 24,539 to 42,808, the net increase being 18,269 members.¹⁴⁹ Because there has always been members leaving the church, and members who have died, the number of new members must be higher than the net increase. The number of baptisms must have been at least 20,000. This means that the number of re-baptisms was about one tenth

¹⁴⁸Smith 1982, 253, 254. Ruohomäki 1989, 106, 107. Update Christian Directory 1989-1990, 79, 83-85. Smith gives a summary of the membership of the Church of Christ in 1973:

Area	Churches	Communicants
Bangkok	4	253
North	15	567
Northeast	37	291
South	1	45
Military Bases	<u>5</u>	<u>65</u>
Total	62	1221

Smith informs that by 1973, transfer growth was 65 percent in the North and 85 percent in the Northeast. In 1989 the Church listed 68 local congregations, of which 23 were Karen hill-tribe churches.

¹⁴⁹Smith 1982, 265. Smith has estimated some figures too high. Example: He has estimated the membership of the Finnish Free Foreign Mission to be 2700 in 1970 and 3360 in 1978. See Smith 1982, 251,253. According to Ruohomäki the correct number for 1978 is 2760. Ruohomäki 1989, 102. The membership of the Seventh Day Adventists rose from 600 in 1960 to 1686 in 1973. Part of this is transfer growth.

of the total number of baptisms between 1958-1973. Apparently, re-baptisms have not been as prominent a feature later.

Baptism in the Independent Churches

Information on baptism in the independent churches was collected by a questionnaire. In 1987 information was available from ten churches. Four of them informed that they accept the baptism given by other churches. Four others informed that they only accept the baptism of those coming from churches with similar teaching about baptism. Two churches left the question unanswered. This indicates that the independent churches do not automatically re-baptize new members coming from other churches.¹⁵⁰ The questionnaire in 1999 gave similar information.

The acceptance of baptism given by other churches must be qualified. Eight of the ten churches informed that they used only immersion; two informed that they baptize by immersion, by applying, or by sprinkling. One of the churches answered that they baptize the children of the members, but added the comment: "The child must understand what the salvation is". All of the other churches answered that the child must be able to ask to be baptized. The required age varied from 10 to 17; three churches did not give any definite age required for baptism. None of the churches answering the survey, except the Sahathai Takua Pa Church, practice infant baptism.¹⁵¹

In most cases, the independent churches accept adult immersion regardless of the person administering the baptism. Adult baptism administered by applying or sprinkling might in some cases be accepted. Infant baptism is generally not accepted as a proper baptism.

The Meaning of Baptism

The historical Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches teach that in baptism, the new member is received into the membership of the church. This stand is maintained in the document formulated among the World Council of Churches called *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. This document was published in Thai in 1986.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰Questionnaire 1987.

¹⁵¹Questionnaire 1987. The two churches informing that they use also applying or sprinkling are the Salvation Church and the Sathupradit Church.

¹⁵²*Baptisma mahasanit lae phantakit karn rapchai. Ekasarn mailek thi 111 kong Khana Kammatikan Lak Khwamchuea lae Rabob Pokkrong haeng Sapha Khrischak Sakol.Krung Geneeva. 1982 Plae lae phalit doi Sapha Khrischak nai Prathet Thai. 1986, 13-15. (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. World Council of Churches. 1982. Published in Thai by the CCT in 1986)*

In Thailand the churches receive most new members as adults through conversion. To a certain degree, this also concerns churches, which practice infant baptism. In a process of conversion, there must be one occasion when the new member is fully incorporated to the church. It seems that in Thailand, this occasion is not always understood to be baptism.

Already the pioneer missionaries in Thailand had to face the question on the meaning of baptism. An example from the early years of the Protestant work illustrates this theological struggle. In July 1861, a man called Nai Kon came to the church in Phethchaburi. His father had received a Christian book several years earlier. After reading the book, Nai Kon had become interested and he had prayed. He had received more books from his neighbors. He considered himself a disciple of Christ after reading them. When the missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission interviewed him, he had memorized several Bible passages, not only repeating, but also understanding them. The missionaries were not certain whether he was a genuine Christian, but considered the incident as a "remarkable instance of the teaching of the Holy Spirit".¹⁵³

Especially Daniel McGilvary seems to have been enthusiastic. According to him, Nai Kon's case was the clearest case of heathen conversion he had witnessed. He hoped that Nai Kon could be employed as an assistant. In April of the next year, it was recorded that Nai Kon had still not yet been baptized. He had strange ideas that he had already been baptized with the Spirit. He did not refuse to be baptized, but wanted to wait. In June 1862, Daniel McGilvary reported that Nai Kon had not yet made a "public profession of his faith by baptism". Nai Kon regarded himself a Christian, but the obligation of baptism was not yet clear to him.¹⁵⁴

The situation remained without a solution. Nai Kon refused to be baptized. The contacts between him and the missionaries continued. His behavior and thoughts proved to be a very hard problem to solve. Especially to Daniel McGilvary, this was a theological problem: can a person be a Christian without being baptized? For McGilvary, the answer seems finally have been affirmative. In 1865, he wrote that Nai Kon was "without any doubt one of God's dear lambs". McGilvary seems to have abandoned the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, which interprets baptism as the covenant between God and his people, and was thus coming closer to those who consider baptism an act of witness or obedience.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³George McFarland to Walter Lowrie, July 10, 1861. RG 028/79. Reel 1, Vol 2. Letter 187. Payap. Herbert Swanson of the Manuscript Division of Payap University directed author's interest to this incident.

¹⁵⁴Daniel McGilvary to Walter Lowrie, June 24, 1862. RG 028/79. Reel 1, Vol 2. Letter 207. Payap.

¹⁵⁵Daniel McGilvary to Walter Lowrie, August 5, 1865. RG 028/79. Reel 1, Vol 2. Letter 211. Payap. New Dictionary of Theology 1988, Baptism. Calvin wrote: " Die Taufe ist ein Zeichen der Einwehung durch das wir in die Gemeinschaft der Kirche ausgenommen werden, um ein Christus eingelebt und damit zu den Kindern Gottes gerechnet zu werden." Johannes Calvin, Unterricht in der

The independent churches mostly use the term *phiti sin baptisma* for baptism. The term *phiti* is a general term used for a ceremony, and the term *sin* is used for the Buddhist precepts. The use of the term *phiti sin baptisma*, together with the statements in the constitutions and confessional statements of the independent churches, leads to the conclusion that the independent churches regard baptism as a sign of repentance, as a testimonial of new birth, and as an act of obedience. Apparently this teaching has made it possible for people to be re-baptized several times. According to Boonmark Kittisarn, re-baptisms were not wrong, only unnecessary. This kind of understanding, together with the patron role of the individuals demanding the new baptism, makes the high number of re-baptisms possible.¹⁵⁶

"Receiving faith" has to some extent replaced baptism as the point of entrance to the church. This line of thought is developed furthest in the Romklao Church. According to Wan Phetchsongkram, baptism has no meaning for salvation. He uses terms Christian, *khristian*, and believer, *phu chuea*, as synonyms. Only experiences, receiving the salvation of God and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, are important. In other independent churches, the teaching on baptism seems to be vague. It is required for full membership, but little is said of its meaning.

4.2.6. Ministry of the Church

The understandings expressed in the Constitution of the Church of Christ in Thailand have dominated the discussion about the ministry of the church. Most of the mission agencies related to the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand have not been interested in the theological reflections on the ministry. The independent churches have partly followed the example of the CCT, partly reacted to its patterns. The Constitution of the CCT, apparently, is not a result of theological reflection; rather, it is an attempt to adapt to the actual situation which developed as result of the policies of the American Presbyterian Mission in Thailand. The terms employed for the ministry are taken from different sources. Some of the terms were created especially for this purpose; some are words from secular use.¹⁵⁷

Christlichen Religion. Institutio Christianae Religionis. Nach der letzten Ausgabe übersetzt und bearbeitet von Otto Weber. Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins. Neukirchen. Kreis Moers. 1955, 898.

¹⁵⁶In the Thai edition of the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry the term *phiti saksit baptisma* is used for baptism, and in a footnote the term *phiti sin baptisma* is criticized as misleading. The term *phiti saksit baptisma* is also used in the Thai edition of the Augsburg Confession, published in 1985. See: *Baptisma mahasanit lae phantakit karn Rapchai* 1986, 13.

¹⁵⁷The Baptism Eucharist and Ministry -document was published in Thai in 1986 by the CCT. Apparently, it is little known among the independent churches. On the ministry: *Baptisma mahasanit lae phantakit karn rapchai* 1986, 58-102.

The term ministry has been translated to many different expressions in Thai. Some of the Thai terms denote the functions of the church; other terms represent the positions and offices of the church. Still others denote the ministers of the church as a group.¹⁵⁸

Ministry - the functions of the church

In the Thai language, three terms, *phantakit*, *pharakit*, and *sasanaborikan*, refer to the functions of the church or a Christian organization. They have approximately the same meaning. The last one, literally meaning religious services, is very seldom used. The ministry of the Church is defined to consist of witness and service. According to the theological dictionary of 1971, the ministry is defined as follows:

"The ministry of the church is not only to preach or to listen the sermon, but it refers to proclamation, to giving assistance and to serving the mankind."(T)¹⁵⁹

Wan Phetchsongkram uses the term *nathee*, duty or responsibility, for the ministry of the church. For him, the ministry of the church is primarily related to evangelism, and equipping the members for evangelism. A central term is "to build". He is speaking about building the church, building people to be strong and building disciples. The definition of the ministry given by him is apparently one-sided; the aspect of service is lacking.¹⁶⁰

Ministry - the offices of the church

The Thai theological dictionary of 1971 seems to differentiate between the ordained ministry and other ministries by using the term *tammaeng* (rank, position or post) only for the office of an ordained minister. The Constitution of the CCT uses the term *tammaeng* for all offices of the church. These include offices for preaching and for the administration of the church. The independent churches follow similar pattern. The administration is so seen as part of the ministry of the church.

The Constitution of the CCT lists altogether six offices in the section of the form of government: ordained minister, pastor, commissioned church worker, elder, deacon, and missionary. Here, missionary denotes an expatriate working with the CCT.

¹⁵⁸*Pramuansap sasanasart lae prachaya* 1971, 144. The terms *phantakit*, *pharakit*, and *sasanaborikan* denote to functions of the church. The terms *tammaeng sasanacharn* and *tammaeng sasanaborikon* denote to the positions and offices of the church. Then terms *khana sasanacharn* and *khana sasanaborikon* denote to the ministerium of the church.

¹⁵⁹*Pramuansap sasanasart lae prachaya* 1971, 144.

¹⁶⁰*Khroschak khrob wongchon*, 80-81.

Missionaries who are ordained ministers have the same rights as the national ordained ministers.¹⁶¹

The offices of the CCT can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of offices that require formal theological studies. These are usually considered to be full-time positions.¹⁶² An ordained minister is called *sasanacharn*. The term originates from words *sasana*, religion, and *acharn*, professor or teacher. It has a strong connotation to teaching. The term pastor, *sitsayaphiban*, is derived from the words *sit*, student or disciple, and *aphiban*, protector. The term for commissioned church worker, *khru sasana*, literally means teacher of religion. The term evangelist, *phu prakat*, used since the nineteenth century for men employed by the mission for itinerant evangelism, is not mentioned any more in the Constitution of the CCT.¹⁶³

The second group consists of elders, *phu pokkrong*, and deacons, *makkanayok*, for whom formal studies in theology are not required. The term *phu pokkrong* is most commonly used for guardians of a minor; the verb *pokkrong* means to govern, rule, administer, and look after. The deacons are assistants to the pastoral leader of the church, and the elders. Their duty is to assist in helping the needy and overseeing the finances of the church. The independent churches usually do not have deacons.¹⁶⁴

The Constitution of the CCT mentions the positions of moderator, *prathan*, vice-moderator, *rong prathan*, and general secretary, *lekhathikan*, but under the title General Assembly. This indicates an understanding that the CCT is an organization established by local churches for some common purposes. The moderator shall be elected among the delegates at the General Assembly meeting every fourth year. The moderator can be an ordained minister, as has happened in most cases, but a layman can also be elected.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.54, 2.55, 2.56. Wells 1958, 191-194. In the Constitution the terms "missionary" and "fraternal worker" are used correspondingly. Actually the term "fraternal worker" is seldom used in Thailand.

¹⁶²The term *phu rapchai Phrachao*, servant of God, is usually used for them. However, this term is not an official term and its actual meaning is quite vague. Another vague term is leader, *phu nam*. It can be used for the elders as well. The required studies for ordination are not fixed by the Constitution of the CCT. Each candidate must pass an examination set up by the District and the Committee on Theological Education of the CCT. See: *Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974. 2.16, 2.33.

¹⁶³On the institution of the evangelist: Swanson 1984, 148-151.

¹⁶⁴On requirements for the office of the elder and deacon: *Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.42, 2.48 2.49. *Makkanayok* is a term also used in Buddhism, referring to the members of the lay committee of the temple.

¹⁶⁵*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.107, 2.108, 2.116, 2.129. The moderator shall also chair the meetings the Administrative Council, and the Executive Committee. In 1978 Mr Vibul Phattarathammas, a business man and an elder of the Saphan Luang Church (Seventh District, Bangkok) was elected as the Moderator. See Prasith Pongudom 1984, 175.

Offices of Preaching

Most Protestant groups, including the Pentecostals and the independent churches use the terms ordained minister, *sasanacharn*, and pastor, *sitsayaphiban*. These churches may also have the office of evangelist. The teaching on ordination is vague in the independent churches. The constitutions do not usually deal with the topic. Normally, the pastor and the elders or the members of council of the church have the right to administer baptism and the Holy Communion.¹⁶⁶

The offices of ordained minister, pastor, and commissioned church worker (evangelist) form a three-step hierarchy, but the relationship between them is complex. According to the Constitution of the CCT, which many independent churches seem to follow, the pastoral leader of a local church is called *sitsayaphiban*, pastor. A church can call either an ordained minister or a commissioned church worker to be the pastor. In both cases the duties are same; it is specifically stated that the pastor carries the duties of an ordained minister.¹⁶⁷

The CCT has wanted to keep the requirements for ordination high. At the same time, the expansion of the work has made it necessary to arrange pastoral care for the new churches. The CCT has separated the office of pastor from ordination. Ordination is looked upon more as conferring an honor than ordaining into the office of the Word and the Sacraments. In most of the local churches, non-ordained pastors or elders carry out the pastoral duties. Reasons for this situation can be found from the past. After the unsuccessful self-support experiment of 1894-1895 in Northern Thailand, the Laos Mission was reluctant to ordain new Thai ministers. This trend continued until the establishment of the CCT in 1934. The CCT has continued with the same kind of policy until the present time.¹⁶⁸

The separation between the ordination and the office of the pastor is apparent among the independent churches. The ordination does not change the rights, duties or responsibilities of a pastor. Some of the founders and leaders of the independent churches were ordained ministers before they founded or joined their churches.

¹⁶⁶Questionnaire May 1987.

¹⁶⁷*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.26, 2.27. According to the Constitution of the CCT, the pastor is elected for a period not longer than five years. The term can be renewed.

¹⁶⁸Smith 1982, 220, 221. In 1978, the CCT had 203 organized and 95 unorganized local churches; at the same time, there were 97 ordained ministers. Perhaps one third of them functioned in administrative posts, as seminary staff, or in educational institutions. Half of the ordained ministers were either in Bangkok, where the church headquarters are located, or in Chiang Mai, where the theological Seminary is established. The ordained ministry has been disconnected from the local church. When a person becomes ordained, his or her name is removed from the roll of the local church and added in the roll of the District Assembly.

Boonmark Kittisarn, Wichien Watkicharoen and Silawej Kanjanamukhda were ordained ministers of the CCT. Wan Phetchsongkram was ordained by the Baptists. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak informed that he was ordained at the Waverley Christian Fellowship in Australia. Before becoming the pastor of the Bangkok Church, Charan Ratanabutra was serving as the assistant pastor of the Maitrichit Church.¹⁶⁹

The status of Dr. Kriengsak as an ordained minister has been in dispute. In the publications of the Hope of Bangkok Church in the 1980s, Dr. Kriengsak was presented as the Senior Pastor and as an ordained minister, *sasanacharn*. In the 1990 questionnaire, it was informed that he was ordained at the Waverley Christian Fellowship in Australia. This information has been challenged, and according to Dr. Kriengsak himself, he has not been ordained as *sasanacharn*.¹⁷⁰

Leaders of the independent churches, ordained in their former churches, continue to be called ordained ministers.¹⁷¹ Other leaders of the independent churches have usually not been ordained. There are some exceptions, for example Nanthachai Mejudhon of the Muang Thai Church and Prasoot Chowadee of the Nakhorn Ratchasima Gospel Church. Within a few years, when the founders reach the age of retirement, the question of ordination becomes topical in the churches founded by the ordained ministers.

A new trend can be observed in the Hope of Bangkok Church. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak was called the pastor; the leaders of the daughter churches were called assistant pastors.¹⁷²

There have been attempts to form a common policy on ordination within the EFT. The EFT had an Ordination Committee whose duty was to define the requirements for ordination, accept the candidates for ordination, administer the ordination, and guarantee ordinations received abroad. The committee functioned until 1980; after that, the EFT has not had a clear policy on ordination. The obvious reason for the failure of the committee was the varying understanding on the nature of ordination and the understanding of the nature of the EFT. In addition, the task of the committee, defined as above, was contradictory to the principle that the EFT would respect the

¹⁶⁹Questionnaire May 1987. Charan Ratanabutra, interview May 16, 1987.

¹⁷⁰ Hope of Bangkok Church 1989, back cover. In December 14, 1998, Dr. Kriengsak told me that he had used the term *sasanacharn* because other churches were using it for their leaders. Actually, others were using it first and he then followed.

¹⁷¹However, the Constitution of the CCT stipulates that if a minister joins a denomination which is not able to be in communion with the CCT, the District Assembly shall withdraw his ministerial credentials. See: *Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2.26.

¹⁷²*Naenam Khrischak Khwamwang Krungthep* 1989.

distinctive features of administration of the work of its members without "infringement or intrusion".¹⁷³

Offices of church administration

The independent churches have a council of the church for administration. The general trend in these churches is that the position of the pastor is strengthened; the pastor is presented as the leader of the church. In all of the independent churches from which information is available, the pastor is the chairman of the governing body of the church..¹⁷⁴

Some of the independent churches mention the office of elder in their constitutions. In some churches, the term elder is not used at all. The definition of the office and the duties of elders seem to differ from the definitions given in the Constitution of the CCT. The form of the government is seen more as a practical than a theological question.

In the Constitution of the CCT, the sections on elders as leaders of the local church have been formulated according to the Presbyterian tradition. The recognition of the ruling elder is based on the distinction between teaching and ruling gifts. This distinction goes back to the Swiss Reformation. The definition of the office of elder is presented as a definition of the true church:

"According to the New Testament, when the disciples became organized, some of them were chosen to be their representatives and take responsibility along with the pastor for looking after and governing the disciples... These leaders were called "elders". So any group of Christians which has the status of a church shall likewise elect elders."(T)¹⁷⁵

The New Life Churches represent a view opposed to the understanding of the CCT. The office of pastor and the office of elder are equated. The pastor is presented as the leading elder.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³*Pravat khwam pen ma khong Sahakit Khristian*, 1987, 4-5. Constitution of EFT, Section 5.2. Local Church Registration 1991.

¹⁷⁴Questionnaire May 1987.

¹⁷⁵*Thammanoon haeng Khrischak nai Prathet Thai* 1974, 2. New Dictionary of Theology 1988, 531. Calvin 1955, 719-720. According to the Constitution of the CCT, an elder has authority equal to that of the ordained minister in governing the church, and he is eligible for any responsibilities in the church. The election as elder is for life, but the local church shall determine the term of active service in the church council. An elder can be authorized by the District Assembly for a period of time to administer the wedding, the reception of new members and catechumens, the funeral, the baptism, and the communion. In order to be eligible to administer the above mentioned rites the elder must have received training.

¹⁷⁶*Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Daokhanong. Thammanoon Khrischak Chivit Mai Bangkhuntiang* 1987.

In the Hope of Bangkok Church, the term elder is not used at all. The church has a pastoral team led by the senior pastor. The leadership is arranged in a pyramidal structure: the pastor, the pastoral team, leaders of the daughter churches, also called assistant pastors, and the cell group leaders.¹⁷⁷

The terms used in the Thai Bible have created some debate. The churches not following the Presbyterian system have been criticizing the terms employed. In the Thai Bible, the Greek term *presbyteros* has been translated as *phu pokkrong* when it refers to governing a local church. (Mostly in Acts and Pauline letters). Other terms have been used in other connections. Occasionally other Greek terms like *arkhon* (Acts 4:25, 23:5) are translated as *phu pokkrong*. One gets the impression that the theological understanding of the translators have influenced the selection of terms. There are other, more neutral terms referring to seniority which could have been used.¹⁷⁸

The attempt to strengthen the role of the pastor is motivated theologically, but probably even more sociologically. It should be seen as an adaptation to the Thai society. It can also be seen as a reaction against to the Presbyterian form of the government of the church maintained especially by the CCT. This form of government with its analogy to

the republican-democratic form of the state has proved problematic for the independent churches. The need to form a clear pattern of leadership has led the independent churches to emphasize the pastor as the real leader of the church.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷Questionnaire, Mai 1987. Kriengsak Charoenwongsak 1990, 30-33.

¹⁷⁸See: *Jerry Perril, Khwammai khong kham samrap phu nam nai Phrakampi Mai. Baptist Theological Seminary*. 1980, 2-5. Mimeograph. (The meaning of the words for the leaders in the New Testament). Perril proposes term *phu awuso* as the equivalent for *presbyteros*. There is not much written information from other churches than the Baptists, but the discussion is going on also in other churches as well.

¹⁷⁹The independent churches have not much expressly criticized the Presbyterian model. The studies made within the Thailand Baptist Association are more explicit on the matter. See: Perril, 1980. On the pyramidal and hierarchical structures in the Thai society: Morell and Chai-anan Samudavija 1982, 17-19, 22-25.

4.3. THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

The independent churches in Thailand were not born nor have they continued to exist in isolation. In this chapter the purpose is to explore how these churches are theologically related not only to contemporary trends, but also to historical theological traditions. Of the contemporary trends, contextualization and the ecumenical relations of the independent churches will be discussed. Finally, an attempt to relate the independent church movement to the theological traditions is made. It will be argued that theologically, the independent churches can be linked to the theological tradition begun by the movement called Radical Reformation or Anabaptist movement during the time of Reformation. My intention is not to claim that there is a historical continuity between the Anabaptist movement and the independent churches in Thailand. There are many layers of theological influences between the Anabaptist movement and the present independent churches in Thailand. Some of the basic differences, which separated the Anabaptist movement from the Lutheran and the (Reformed) Swiss Reformation, can, however, be observed in the independent churches in Thailand.

4.3.1. Contextualization

Actually, there are several terms that refer to the relationship between faith and culture or cultures. The terms "contextualization" and "inculturation" have been most widely accepted. These terms, and especially their earlier equivalents (accommodation, adaptation and indigenization), were developed in missiological thinking, but in recent years, there has been a trend to consider all theological reflection as contextual.

Trends in contextualization

The Roman Catholic theologians favor the term "inculturation". Contextualization, favored by the Protestants, has perhaps a more extended and less precise meaning than "inculturation". The term "indigenization" has become obsolete. "Accommodation" and "adaptation" were popular in Roman Catholic missiology before the Second Vatican Council. They refer to a conception that is now considered inadequate.¹⁸⁰

The roots of the Roman Catholic inculturation theology are in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The term inculturation has been introduced and popularized largely by the members of the Society of Jesus. The most important sources are the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), the

¹⁸⁰ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Geoffrey Chapman, London. 1988. Reprint 1990, 11. The Second Vatican Council used the term "incarnation". Shorter is a Jesuit theologian.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) and the Degree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*).¹⁸¹

Aylward Shorter defines inculturation as the on-going dialogue between faith and culture. More precisely, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and culture. Shorter makes a distinction between the Christian patrimony and the Sacred Tradition. These two are not to be confused. The Tradition concerns the truth about Jesus, while patrimony concerns the cultural forms taken by such insight. The meaning of authoritative faith-statements cannot be contradicted or whittled down, but they can only be understood in a cultural context. They may need subsequent reformulation in order to be grasped by people of another culture.¹⁸²

The term "contextualization" was first coined in the early 1970s, in the circles of the Theological Education Fund founded by the International Missionary Council conference in Ghana in 1957-1958. The new term soon caught on and became a blanket term for a variety of theological models. David Bosch identifies two major types of contextual theology: the indigenization model and the socio-economic model. Both of these can again be divided into two subtypes. He argues that the missionary message of the Christian Church incarnated itself in the life and the world of those who embraced it, but this essentially contextual nature of the faith has been recognized only fairly recently.¹⁸³

Within the churches and mission organizations related to the Lausanne Movement, the term contextualization was adopted later. The term itself was accepted, but

¹⁸¹Shorter 1990, 10, 191-205. Shorter draws together many of the strands in the contemporary Roman Catholic thinking and praxis on inculturation. He deals with documentary analysis of early church, medieval, post reformation and contemporary documents; especially the documents of the Second Vatican Council and developments since the Council. The first recorded use of the term "inculturation" is in 1962 by Fr. Joseph Masson SJ, professor of the Gregorian University in Rome. The bishops of Africa and Madagascar in the Rome Synod on Evangelization 1974 made a strong statement about the reality of inculturation, but did not use the term. The Federation of Asian Episcopal Conferences in April of 1974 spoke of "an indigeneous and inculturated Church" The 32nd Congregation of the Society of Jesus December 1974 to April 1975 used the term inculturation fairly frequently in its texts.

¹⁸²Shorter 1990, 11, 63-66. Shorter quotes Pedro Arrupe SJ: "The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation'." Quotation from: Pedro Arrupe, 'Letter to the whole Society on Inculturation', 1978. In Aixala J. (ed.), 1981. *Other Apostolates Today: Selected Letters and Addresses of Pedro Arrupe SJ*. St Louis. Vol 3. pp 172-81.

¹⁸³Bosch 1993, 420-421. Bosch is following Ukpong, Schreiter and Waldenfels. The indigenization motif presents itself either as a translation or as an inculturation model; the socio-economic pattern of contextualization can be evolutionary (political theology and the theology of development) or revolutionary (liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology etc.). For Bosh, only the inculturation model and the revolutionary model qualify as contextual theologies proper.

attempts were made to give new definitions to its content. The Evangelicals emphasize the authority of the Scripture. The Evangelicals thus begin from a theological framework, not a cultural. The revelation given in the Bible is seen as transcultural and immutable. David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen give a comprehensive treatment of contextualization from an evangelical point of view. On speaking about the supracultural validity of the truth of Gospel, they employ the terms “categorical validity” and “principal validity”. The former refers to the aspects of the Christian message, which are absolutely nonnegotiable; the latter concerns ethical implications.¹⁸⁴

In Asia, the Asia Theological Association (ATA) has provided the organizational form for the co-operation between evangelicals in theological education and research. It was established in 1968 out of two concerns: the evangelicals had neglected theological scholarship in the past, and the Asian church leadership was increasingly being influenced by Western liberal theology. Theologically the ATA represents mainstream evangelicalism. It functions as an accrediting agency for the theological institutes. The member institutes represent various confessional backgrounds, including Lutheran institutes. The ATA has established the Theological Book Trust, which concentrates on publishing theological books written from an Asian evangelical perspective.¹⁸⁵

A rather recent phenomenon in Asian evangelical theology has been the emphasis on the critical evaluation of the dependence of the Western theology on the worldview of the Enlightenment. In order to create truly biblical Asian theology, the Asian theologians must go beyond the Enlightenment. A comprehensive treatment of Asian contextual theologies and an assessment of the theological trends is given by Hwa Yung. He saw the study of the development of the early Christian Creeds, especially the Nicene and Apostles’ Creed and the Chalcedonian Formula, as a starting point for Asian Systematic Theology. He considered it important to see how the apostolic faith was contextually shaped in the process of its formulation in the Early Church. After that it is possible ask how this process might be carried out afresh in various Asian contexts of today. In this process, the emphasis should be on relational and experimental knowledge.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴John R. Davis, Poles Apart, Kanok Bannasan, Bangkok, Theological Book Trust, Bangalore. 1993, 16. David J. Hesselgrave and Eduard Rommen, Contextualization, Meanings, Methods and Models. Baker Book House 1989, 172-174.

¹⁸⁵Hwa Yung, Mangoes or Bananas. The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology. Biblical Theology in an Asian Context. Regnum Books International. Oxford. 1997, 191-195. The catalogue from 1998 contains names of 19 published books with several waiting to be printed. On the member organizations e.g: Asia Theological Association General Assembly Minutes. July 22, 1955. YMCA Bangkok.

¹⁸⁶ Hwa Yung 1997,1-8,194, 228. Dr. Hwa Yung is Principal of the Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

Within the Lutheran Churches, contextualization is usually seen as a process of new inter-pretations and adaptations of the Confession. This is evident in a document published in 1988 by the Lutheran World Federation, *Together in God's Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission*. In Asia the need for contextualized theology has for example created a series of theological symposiums called the Luther Symposiums, sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation. The Advisory Committee on Theological Education in Asia (ACTEAS) has been established as a forum of co-operation in theological education for LWF member Churches in Asia.¹⁸⁷

Contextualization in Thailand and the independent churches

A common observation is that the Thai people have felt the churches in Thailand foreign. Western forms of worship, church administration, evangelization and theological education have been followed. The interest in contextualization is largely a phenomenon of the 1980s. However, already earlier concern was sometimes expressed on the foreign image of the Thai churches. The international trends in contextualization have influenced Thai churches, and contextualization has acquired different forms. The Thai translation for the verb “to contextualize” is *prayuk*, to apply, to make useful or to be applied. The selection of the term implies a pragmatic approach.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷Together in God's Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission. Adopted by the LWF Executive Committee in 1988. LWF Documentation No 26. Published by the Lutheran World Federation, Geneva. 3-13. The theological understanding of mission is presented from the perspective of the Holy Trinity. Actually, the document is preoccupied more with the Ecumenical Creeds than the Confessions from the time of Reformation. Themes as the kingdom of God, law and gospel, and the theology of the cross are set aside. The document was published in Thai by the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education. The documents of the Luther Symposiums have been published by the Lutheran World Federation. On the Augsburg Confession in Asian Lutheran Churches: Lassi Stenman, Den Augsburgiska bekännelsens betydelse för de nationella Lutherska kyrkornas mission in Asien och svårigheter vid dess tillämpning. Åbo Akademi 1990. (Unpublished Master of Theology dissertation). On interpretation of the Augsburg Confession in Thai context: Yakob Mäkelä, Bot thalaeng satha khong khrischak Lutheran nai boribot Thai. Sathaban Sasanasart Lutheran, Krungthep, 1999.

Sherer, Braaten and Öberg attempt to interpret the missiological aspects in Luther's theology and in the Lutheran Confessions in the changing context. The Confession has a very prominent place in the discussion going on in Finland. See: Sherer 1982, 1-11. Carl E. Braaten, The Apostolic Imperative. Nature and Aim of the Church's Mission and Ministry. Augsburg Publishing House. Minneapolis. 1985, 7-32. Ingemar Öberg, Luther och världsmissionen. Historisk-systematiska studier med särskild hänsyn till bibelutläggningen. Studier utgivna av Institutionen för systematisk teologi vid Åbo Akademi. 23. Åbo. Lunde Forlag, Oslo. EFS-förlaget Uppsala. 1991, III-IV, 1-18. On discussion in Finland: See f. ex. Henrik Smedjebacka, Avartuva lähetys. Lähetys tänään I. Suomen Lähetysseuran julkaisu. Kirjapaja, Helsinki. 1988. Risto Ahonen, Kenen vastuulla lähetys. Lähetys tänään II. Suomen Lähetysseuran julkaisu. Kirjapaja, Helsinki. 1989.

¹⁸⁸On the foreign image of the Thai churches: Davis 1993, 14-17.

In the Roman Catholic Church in Thailand, inculturation has meant, among other things, adopting patterns of the traditional culture closely related to Buddhism. As was mentioned in the chapter 2.2., the Catholics have employed the Buddhist technical terms for bishop, priest and temple. Some modern church buildings have been built and decorated to resemble Buddhist temples. On some occasions Catholics have erected Madonna altars resembling spirit houses on their premises. It seems that the main interest has been in evangelization and in adjusting the life of the Christian laity in the Thai culture. According to Buddhist criticism, the Catholics have a policy of assimilation, and they conduct dialogue with Buddhists in order to convert them. It is said that languages other than Thai are mostly used in theological education and studies. However, the Roman Catholics have been involved in developing Thai as a theological language.¹⁸⁹

In the early years, the American Presbyterian Mission failed to create a functioning system of Bible instruction to the church members. According to Swanson, the result was that "the Northern Thai church was an ignorant church. It lacked access to the Bible. It lacked regular Bible study. It did not know the Bible. It lacked a theological voice of its own". Later some improvement took place, but the weaknesses became visible during the controversy created by the revival in 1939-1941. Prasith Pongudom concludes that the church members did not understand the Presbyterian doctrines and easily accepted views differing from the Presbyterian theology.¹⁹⁰

Within the CCT, contextualization has especially meant dialogue with Buddhists. The Payap University (McGilvary Theological Seminary) has been engaged in this dialogue. The Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lectures were held annually, beginning in 1963. The purpose of the lectures was to strengthen the understanding

¹⁸⁹The church buildings most clearly resembling Buddhist temples are the Ruam Rudee Church in Bangkok and a Catholic center in Pattaya. The author has seen Madonna altars resembling spirit houses in Nakorn Nayok province and in exhibitions in Bangkok.

Professor Kirati Boonchua of the Catholic Assumption University University told that Thai is not used as the medium of theological studies. However, he himself has written an introduction to the teachings of the Catholic Church. *Kirati Boonchua, Lak khwam chuea chaokhris catholic. Chud sasanasuksa. Khristasana phak raek. Thai Wattana Phanid, Krungthep Mahanakorn.2529.* 149 pages. Professor Kirati has written on Philosophy and on dialogue with Buddhists. On Buddhist criticism: The Catholic Plot Against Buddhism, 1986, 1-5, 60. Prof Kirati is quoted: "When the value of Buddha's philosophy is acknowledged, why not pay homage and respect Buddha openly as a great leader of the mind...as great wise man of the world who helped to clarify the mind so that one is ready to hear good news of Jesus and can deeply appreciate it."

Somprasong Bantaw has studied the impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Catholic Church in Thailand. See: Somprasong Bantaw, Proclamation of the Good News as Dialogue since the second Vatican Council and the Thai Church. Graduate School of Philosophy and Religious studies. Assumption University, Bangkok. 1999. Unpublished Master of Arts dissertation.

¹⁹⁰Prasith Pongudom 1984, 87. Swanson 1984, 92.

between the two religions in order to face the problems of the modern world, most notably secularization. The lectures were later published. In 1967 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu was invited to deliver the lectures. The initiative was obviously taken by the foreign missionaries related to the Seminary.¹⁹¹

Research in the history of the church in Thailand has been an important basis for contextual theology. Several histories of local churches in Thai have been written. Research on various aspects of the history of the church, especially in Northern Thailand, have been published in Thai and in English. The Office of History of the Church of Christ in Thailand was established to co-ordinate the research. The Office, and its leader Herbert Swanson, has also been instrumental in arranging theological consultations.

In the 1970s, most of the groups related to the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand were struggling to open their work. In this situation, the main emphasis was naturally on evangelism and church planting. Later, the main concern in contextualization has still been the effective communication of the Gospel. The pioneering work in contextualization was done by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Covenant Church of America – Thailand Mission.¹⁹²

John R. Davis made a major study on contextualization of the Christian message in Thai culture from an evangelical point of view. Dr. Davis has been serving as the Director of the Phayao Bible College. This institute, and especially the Bangkok Bible College and Seminary, have been important to the independent churches as places to educate the leaders. He attempted to investigate reasons for the lack of response by Thai people to the Gospel. He tried to analyze some of the problems and then proposed some radical solutions. Apparently, the non-credal tradition of many American evangelical churches influenced his work.¹⁹³

Generally, the independent churches have been interested in ecclesiological questions. In this field, they have attempted to develop contextualized organizational forms for the church. In doing this they have been both pragmatically seeking new organizational structures, and discussing the theological significance of

¹⁹¹Kenneth E. Wells, Theravada Buddhism and Protestant Christianity. Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lectures. Second Series. Thailand Theological Seminary. Chiangmai. 1963, 2-3. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu 1967. In the 1950s and 1960s the most outstanding persons related to the Thailand Theological Seminary developing the dialogue with Buddhism were Sinclair Thompson, Kenneth E. Wells and Kosuke Koyama. Later Thai authors like Maen Pongudom have continued with similar attitudes.

¹⁹²Davis, 1993, 9-11, 146-148. In 1994, Ruth and Inchai Srisuwan who had been coworkers of the Covenant Church established the Thai Faith and Music Foundation in Bangkok. The Foundation teaches Thai music and dance forms and the playing of traditional Thai musical instruments. Thai Faith and Music Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand. Internet Homepage. July 2000. Online URL:<http://www.iserv.net/~thaicov/tfmf.html>. The Srisuwans have also been teaching Thai Music at the Lutheran Institute for Theological Education.

¹⁹³John R. Davis 1993, 9-11, 146-148. Davis proposes a Thai Creed

the church. In addition, there are reflections on soteriological questions and demonology. The theological reflections are born from the need to adjust to the environment shaped by popular Buddhism. Part of the reflections are reactions to the Western, especially American evangelical theology and praxis.

Of the leaders of the independent churches, especially Wan Phetchsongkram of the Romklao Church, and Nantachai and Ubolwan Mejudhon of the Muang Thai Church, are important developers of contextual theology. Rev. Wan's thoughts were discussed in chapters 3.5.1. and 4.2.4. He has dealt with the significance of the church and Buddhism. The Mejudhons have developed the concept of "meekness" as the way of Christian witness and Christian way of living. Dr. Nantachai has written from a historical point of view. The aggressive methods used by the missionaries, and later by Thai Christians, have produced scant results. The missionaries have not understood the Thai cultural values, and this has led the Thai Buddhists to reject their message. When meekness is demonstrated, the Buddhists are more responsive.¹⁹⁴

Dr. Ubonwan, following Suntaree Komin's theory on Thai values and behavior patterns, stated:

"The Thai meekness emphasizes the gentle behavior pattern in social interaction. Meek manners manifest themselves in gentle, tender, beautiful, and respectful body movements as well as verbal communication... In Thai culture one must enter the Thai relational boundary before discussing religion."¹⁹⁵

The concept of meekness is related to the traditional cultural values. Dr. Ubolwan used Thai literary examples, both ancient and recent, in explaining the meekness. It seems possible that meekness is especially related to the values of the elite.¹⁹⁶

According to my observations, there is a tension between meekness and assertiveness in the behavior of the leaders of the churches. The leaders of the fast-growing independent churches display definite assertiveness in their public speeches.

The missionaries have proclaimed the Gospel in a culturally insensitive way, but the Mejudhons do not criticize the content of the message the missionaries tried to communicate. The question is about adapting to cultural values and ways of communicating the Gospel. Very little is said about the Christian doctrines. The content of the Gospel is seen as more or less given. This way of understanding

¹⁹⁴Nantachai Mejudhon, 1997. 1-4, 397-412. Ubolwan Mejudhon, 1997.1-25,374-380

¹⁹⁵Ubolwan Mejudhon 1997,16-17

¹⁹⁶Ubolwan Mejudhon 1997, 74-125. Dr. Ubolwan employed the Wessandorn Jakata myth and Pai Daeng, (The Red Bamboo) novel by Kukrit Pramoj as examples of the meekness. Both the husband and wife come from the families of government officials (*kha ratchakan*). Ubolwan Mejudhon 1997, 125-130.

contextualization is common in the evangelical segment of Thai Protestantism in general. The Gospel is universal, but it must be applied to different cultural environments. This basic attitude is reflected in the Thai term for contextualization, *karn prayuk*.

The historical aspect in contextualization seems to be restricted to the context of Thailand. Contextualization is mainly seen as a reaction to the ministry of the missionaries. There is very little reflection on the larger traditions. The dependency of the Thai Protestantism on the Anglo-American culture is visible in this respect.

4.3.2. Identity and unity

The independent churches are living in a tension between building their own identity and searching for co-operation with other Christian organizations. The search for co-operation does not seem to include fixed organizational forms, which could restrict their autonomy. It seems to be difficult to relate the search for co-operation and unity in Thailand to the developments within the ecumenical movement in the Western world.

Identity

The independent churches emphasize their individual identity. The most dynamic of them have formulated their own Statements of Faith. The influence of the American non-credal tradition can be seen in the fact that the Ecumenical Creeds are little known and very seldom mentioned in the Statements.

There seem to be two different motivations for establishing independent churches. These motivations are an important part of building their identities. The independent churches see themselves either as the faithful remnant, or as churches called to evangelize and expand. The churches born as protests against the Church of Christ in Thailand saw themselves as the faithful remnant when others had gone astray. For the later independent churches, the motivation seems to be different. Effective methods for evangelization and expansion are the main concern.

The idea of the faithful remnant was prominent in Boonmark Kittisarn's early ministry. The same idea is evident in the process that led to establishing the Church of God (Chapter 3.2). The later independent churches, especially Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church, see themselves as examples of the missionary church. The main motivation for their establishment was an understanding that the existing mission organizations and national denominations were not effective enough in evangelization and church planting.

The term "missionary church" is used here to emphasize that Romklao Church and Hope Bangkok Church see themselves as churches that have been sent to the world.

Their structures were developed to be suitable for expansion. The term “missionary church” has also been used within the World Council of Churches to denote the search for new models to cope with secularization. After the Second World War, the impact of the on-going secularization of the churches became a central theme in Europe and Northern America; new meaningful ways for the churches to live in the secular world were sought. The traditional church-centered missiological understanding became criticized. Conversion became defined as a social change.¹⁹⁷

The radical functionalism mentioned above did not receive unanimous approval even within the World Council of Churches. However, polarization took place in the 1960s. The Church Growth theology, initiated by Donald McGavran, can be seen as a reaction against the developments within the WCC.¹⁹⁸

The discussion on secularization may not have much relevance in the situation of the churches in Thailand. When the McGilvary Theological Seminary initiated the Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lectures in 1963, on-going secularization was mentioned as one of the reasons for the dialogue. However, Buddhism has continued

¹⁹⁷The Church for Others. Two Reports on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation. Ed. by the Department on Studies in Evangelism, World Council of Churches. World Council of Churches, Geneva. 1967. Fourth printing January 1969. See also Hans-Werner Gensichen, Glaube für die Welt. Theologische Aspekte der Mission. Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh. 1971, 168-173.

The reports reflect the tension between the theological and sociological approaches, but even more, they can be seen as a radical reformulation of theology of the church and mission. *The Church for Others* contains two reports of the Department of Studies on Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. Both reports reflect a critical attitude toward the traditional structures of the churches and a search for a new style of doing theology. Dr. J. C. Hoekendijk participated the work of both Groups, and apparently his thinking greatly influenced the outcome of the reports. Some traditional theological terms are used, but they are given a new content. In its presentation, the report is quite far removed from the traditional theological definitions of the Church. This is seen especially in its definitions of the salvation, the mission of God, *missio Dei*, and the place of the Church in God's mission. *Missio Dei*, into which the churches are called to participate, takes place within churches own cultural and social contexts. No references to cross-cultural mission are made.

"The Church is not called to be the institute of salvation but to participate in God's action for the salvation of the world. Everything in her structures that suggests sacralization must be tested to see if it hinders or even prevents the Church from being taken up into the divine mission for the salvation of the world". (38)

¹⁹⁸Some, like Hans-Werner Gensichen took seriously the criticism toward the traditional mission work but same time tried to find relevant solutions from basis of the traditional understandings. The terms "missionary intention" and "missionary dimension" were employed. Gensichen. 1971, 80-100, 134-138, 244-249.

"Das biblische Zeugnis statuiert sowohl eine theologische "Dimension" als auch eine anthropologisch-kerygmatische "Intention", und jeder der beiden Aspekte muss im vollen Umfang zur Geltung kommen, wenn die biblische Sicht nicht verkürzt werden soll." (85)

The terms "dimension" and "intention" might first have been used by Leslie Newbigin. On McGavran: Pinola 1995, 143-182. McGavran 1982, 23-56. According to Gensichen, McGavran deals mainly with strategies, not with the theological principles (Grundsatzfragen). Gensichen 1971, 136.

to be a vital factor in the entire society, and a clear missionary aspect is seen in its functions. In addition to the elements of Theravada Buddhism, the other elements of popular Buddhism dealing with the unseen world are prominent in Thailand. The churches are not facing a secularized society, but a society where non-Christian religious traditions are alive, influential and capable of adjusting to the changing situations.

Unity

The nature of unity and its expressions have been a debated topic within the Christian churches world wide. On one hand, there has been the search for visible and organizational unity; on the other hand unity has been understood as a spiritual fact leaving the organizational expressions secondary or even unnecessary.

The modern ecumenical movement began in the 19th century. The early ecumenical organizations were mainly begun as individual interests. They consisted of individual Christians, not churches. The World Council of Churches (WCC) differed from the previous organizations because it was an organization of the churches. Different models of unity have been presented within the ecumenical movement. The aim of the World Council of Churches is to help in building a “visible unity”, which in New Delhi in 1961 was defined as the “unity of all in each place”. In Nairobi in 1975, “conciliar fellowship” became the other model used within the WCC. These two models are not mutually exclusive. The third model is “unity in reconciled diversity”, preferred especially by the confessional world federations. The Roman Catholics have developed a model called the “*typos*” model. It has similarities with the “unity in reconciled diversity” model. The latest model is called communion (*koinonia*) ecclesiology. Since the early 1970s bilateral negotiations between Churches have become an important form of the developments.¹⁹⁹

In order to reduce criticism, the Central Committee of the WCC adopted in 1950 a document called *The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches*. It declared that the WCC was not attempting to become a structure above the member churches. However, since the Evanston General Assembly in 1954, the emphasis has been on visible and organizational unity.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹Gaines 327-354, 1019-1025. On the various models: [Risto Saarinen, Johdatus ekumeniikkaan](#). Kirjaneliö, Helsinki. 1994,113-112. Saarinen gives short descriptions about these and also other models discussed within the ecumenical movement. On the bilateral talks: Saarinen 1994, 95-110. The Lutheran Churches have been active in bilateral talks. There have been bilateral negotiations with Orthodox, Reformed, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Pentecostal and Free Churches. The Roman Catholics have had negotiations for instance with the Orthodox and Anglican Churches and the Pentecostal movement. On the Roman Catholic – Pentecostal dialogue: Kärkkäinen, 1998, 5-7. The purpose of the Roman Catholic – Pentecostal dialogue was not consider visible unity but to become better informed of each other’s theology and spirituality.

²⁰⁰Gaines 1966, 327-335, 346-350, 374-379, 1013-1025.

The Lima document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry is an important result of ecumenical discussions. Edmund Schlink has proposed an ecumenical Dogmatics. According to him, in order to realize the unity, a consensus in confession is needed. This means a consensus in the Trinitarian and Christological confessions. This can take place either by mutually acknowledging the confessions of the churches, or by declaring a commonly accepted concordia. There were local or regional confessions in the early church. Acknowledging that God is working also in other churches should lead to acknowledging each other's ministries. It is not necessary to reach a consensus in all theological questions. However, the anathemas are contrary to the unity of the church.²⁰¹

Schlink seems to deal with the unity of a regional church. He did not deal with the relationships between the regional churches, or the relationship between the regional churches and the Church Universal. Thus it is possible to bypass the question of the hierarchy of the ministries.

The emphasis on regional churches is also known in Roman Catholic missiology. Referring to the Lumen Gentium decree, Aylward Shorter summarizes:

"It is a commonplace of contemporary ecclesiology that the primary reality of the Church is the relatively autonomous particular church. As the Fathers of Vatican II declared: 'It is in these (particular churches) and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists'. The Catholic Church is not only a hierarchical Church, it is also a communion, and this community dimension appears both within and between the particular churches. Within particular churches are found communities, some of which are culturally distinct."²⁰²

However, it is made clear that the unity is possible only under the leadership of the Pope, the Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ.²⁰³

²⁰¹Edmund Schlink, *Ökumenische Dogmatik. Grundzüge*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. 1983, 678-681, 694-708. Gensichen 1971, 149-150. Baptism, Eucharist an Ministry 1982, . Edmund Schlink elaborates on similar premises with the Lima document. Division into heretical and schismatic divisions has according to him become problematic. This can be seen e.g. in the relationship between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches. The most difficult problems in seeking unity are the lack of the common celebrated Holy Communion and the lack of acknowledgement of the ministries. According to Schlink, the conditions for the existence of the Church are the Canon of the Bibel, the confession and the church order, *Kirchenrecht*. These form the tradition of the Church in the narrowest sense. The unity of the Church is based upon these. Hans-Werner Gensichen in speaking about the so called young churches mentions the search for identity, "relativization" of the historical confessions and efforts for effective overcoming of divisions as the dynamics leading toward the unity of the Church.

²⁰² Shorter, 1990, 14. Lumen Gentium, Article 23.

²⁰³See: *Kirkon lähetystoiminnasta. Vatikaanin 2.kirkolliskokouksen dekreetti. Ad Gentes. De activitate missionali Ecclesiae*. Katolinen tiedotuskeskus. 1968, Article 5, 19, 22, 29.

The developments mentioned above seem to have only tangential influences on the Christian community in Thailand. Only the Church of Christ in Thailand is a member of the World Council of Churches. Since the 1970s, its relationship to the WCC seems to be rather distant. Increased fragmentation has continued within the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand.

Traditionally, the Evangelicals related to the Lausanne Movement have not been interested in the visible and organizational forms of unity. This basic attitude is visible in the Lausanne Covenant and the Manila Manifesto. (1989)²⁰⁴

The independent churches in Thailand see themselves as a part of Protestant Christianity. By seeking membership in the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, they have acknowledged that they are the only true church. Krung Thai Church (chapter 3.3.1.) is an example of a church initially claiming to be the only true church but later acknowledging the rights of the others.

In the end of the 1990s the Hope of Bangkok Church was, in addition to the United Pentecostal Church the only major group outside the EFT. Its membership in the EFT was suspended on practical, not doctrinal grounds.

The emergence of the independent churches in Thailand is a part of the fragmentation observed by David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson:

“No one anticipated how the search for united or uniting churches would be rendered virtually meaningless by the massive increases in denominationalism across the world as Christianity spread. Thus the number of Christian denominational bodies in the world, which in the year 1900 stood at 1,880 distinct denominations, rapidly increased from year to year throughout the century. As of A.D. 2000 the total is 33,800 distinct and organizationally separate denominations... Today the rate is nearly one new denomination every day.”²⁰⁵

In Thailand, even groups belonging to the same theological tradition have not been able to co-operate in creating unified structures. There are more than 15 Pentecostal organizations in Thailand.²⁰⁶ The major evangelical mission agencies, the Christian Missionary Alliance, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade, established separate denominations.

History must be taken into account in the evaluation of the present situation. The 1950s and 1960s were a time of confusion and divisions in the Christian community in Thailand. This was mainly caused by outside influences, but national leaders were

²⁰⁴On Manila congress and Manifesto e.g: Smedjebacka, 1989, 85-154

²⁰⁵Barrett and Johnson, 2000. Fragmentation has taken place among the Protestants but also among the Orthodox churches. The Anglican Communion is surrounded by forty schismatic denominations.

²⁰⁶Nishimoto 1996, XIII.

also prominent in some disputes. In the 1980s fast-growing new independent churches caused disputes by their working methods. In the 1990s co-operation has increased. This, however, concerns mainly the Protestants. The relations to the Roman Catholics are still distant, but not hostile.

The Protestant community in Thailand consists of diverse groups. The main division into the Church of Christ in Thailand and the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand is created more by actions of the Government agencies than theologically motivated agreements (Chapter 3.6.1.).

The Presbyterian tradition has been dominant in the CCT, but it has been developing towards more pluralistic conglomerate. However, developments within the EFT are most crucial for understanding the search for unity.

The Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand and its members

The Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand says very little about the church. The spiritual unity is acknowledged but nothing is said how this unity is expressed.

"There is a spiritual unity of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, which is the body of Christ, the Church."

This statement should be seen in the context of the controversy between the Evangelical and the Ecumenical movements. The Evangelical movements emphasize the spiritual nature of unity, and oppose what they see as an attempt to establish an organizational unity by the World Council of Churches.²⁰⁷

The EFT was established for co-operation. There were different needs and purposes for this. After the EFT was established, the number of local churches established by the mission agencies has increased, and these began to seek membership in the EFT. This led to a theologically as well as a practically confusing situation. In many cases, the local churches had a double membership. They were directly members of the EFT, but simultaneously also members of their national organizations. Lists of churches published in the directories verify this.

The number of national Churches (denominations) is increasing. These vary from loose fellowships to more structured denominations. The development of national

²⁰⁷Constitution of the EFT, Section 3. According to Gaines the unity in the ecumenical movement grew rapidly between 1910 and 1948. The denominations had, however, generally left the expression of unity to independent and unofficial organizations. The World Council of Churches was to be an organization of the Churches, controlled by them. During the process of its formation the World Council of Churches became the object of bitter attack. One of the reasons for attack was the alleged overemphasis on ecclesiastical centralized unity. Gaines 1966, 327, 331-335.

bodies is a fairly recent phenomenon, since most of the mission agencies have begun their ministries in Thailand after the Second World War. The oldest of the denominations is the Gospel Church of Thailand, in co-operation with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It was organized in 1948, twenty years after the work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance began. Its constitution emphasizes the autonomy of the local congregations.²⁰⁸

In 1987, seven of the national member organizations of EFT could be identified as national church bodies. Two of them were tribal groups of the Lisu and Lahu Christians. Three of them were Pentecostal: the Thailand Assemblies of God, the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand, and the Full Gospel Church Foundation. The Associated Churches in Thailand consisted of local congregations mostly connected to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. The seventh was the Gospel Church of Thailand.²⁰⁹

In addition to the bodies organized by 1987, there were groups in the process of becoming organized as denominations. In 1987, the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand, comprising of the local congregations established by the Finnish Foreign Free Mission, was in the process of formulating its constitution. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand was established in 1994.²¹⁰

In 1998 the member organizations of the EFT were organized into 8 categories according to the ministries they were involved in. One of the categories consisted of organizations that were involved in direct evangelism and church planting. There were 28 organizations in this category. However, this category is confusing. There were several mission organizations in this category, most of them obviously striving to become denominations. There are, however, cases where both the national denomination, and the foreign mission organization co-operating with it, are included in this category²¹¹

²⁰⁸Heckendorf 1983, 1, 16. List of member organizations, EFT Office 1987. (EFT) *Raigan Prajam Pee* 1985, 40-42. The Church Constitution of the Gospel Church of Thailand. 1983, 1-3. The Thailand Assemblies of God and the Lutheran Mission in Thailand were most clearly developing as national churches, the local churches not being individually members of the EFT. Other groups are in this respect more loosely organized. This can be verified from the membership statistics of the EFT. Preliminary Guidelines of the Thai Lutheran Fellowship. Minutes of the General Assembly of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand 1987, 9-14. *Thammanoon Khristian Samphan Prathet Thai*. (Constitution of the Thailand Assemblies of God). 1984.

²⁰⁹*Thammanoon Khristian Samphan Prathet Thai*. (Thailand Assemblies of God).1984. List of member organizations, EFT Office 1987. The Thailand Assemblies of God was a clearly structured denomination, while the other two Pentecostal organizations appeared to be loose fellowships, where the local congregations were rather autonomous.

²¹⁰*Thammanoon Phra Kittikhun Somboon nai Prathet Thai*. (Constitution of the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand) Draft, c. 1986 The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand 1994. (Thai and English.)

The co-operation between different Pentecostal churches has attained new forms. Since 1985, the major Pentecostal groups have arranged annual revival and Bible conferences called *Riddeed* (Power). The national leaders have been prominent in these meetings. A loose organization was set up for the campaigns. Both the Hope of Bangkok Church and Romklao Church participated in these conferences. In 1988, the Hope of Bangkok Church withdrew from the *Riddeed*-organization, and started to arrange its own conferences under the title *Khrischak* (Church).²¹²

The Romklao Church was excluded from organizing the *Riddeed* organization after 1996. Thus, only the originally mission-established Pentecostal bodies lead the *Riddeed* meetings. The division into traditional Pentecostals, with connections to the established Pentecostal movement in North America and Europe, and to others has become clear.

One prominent feature in the developments in the EFT has been the emphasis on the autonomy of the local church. In the Nordic countries, the Pentecostal movement has emphasized this autonomy. This explains the fact that the Finnish Foreign Free Mission, the first of the Pentecostal groups to enter Thailand after the Second World War, was the last of the major Pentecostal Missions to develop a national body for the local churches it had established. The Overseas Missionary Fellowship, as an independent mission, has primarily been interested in church planting. The future of the local churches has been of secondary interest. The Christian and Missionary Alliance emphasizes the local congregation as "the visible organized expression of the Body of Christ."²¹³

In addition to the emerging denominations, a trend leading in a different direction was observed. In the Annual Meetings of the EFT and sometimes in other connections, there were voices for strengthening the structure of the EFT. There were people who wanted to develop the EFT in the direction of a national Church. In 1985-1986, a

²¹¹ Directory of Member Organizations of EFT 1998-1999. 1-2, 5-7. The Gospel Church in Thailand and the Siam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance as well as the Finnish Foreign Free Mission and the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand are included into the category of organizations involved in church planting.

²¹² *Riddeed*. *Singhakhom* 5, 1985, *Pruesachikajon* 17, 1986, 1989. (Circular letters). Ruohomäki 1988, 126-127, 139. Programs of the *Riddeed*- and *Khrischak*- conferences have been published annually. According to Ruohomäki, he himself took an initiative to arrange a meeting of the national leaders of the different Pentecostal groups. After the meeting the *Riddeed*- campaigns were arranged as a joint effort.

²¹³ On the Pentecostal movement in the Nordic countries: Bloch-Hoell 1956, 379-381. Helander 1985, 16-17, 22, 185, 201. L. Ahonen 1984, 38-39. Ruohomäki 1988, 109-110, 123. According to Ruohomäki, establishing a foundation for the church properties in Thailand caused discussions on doctrine among the missionaries and the churches. Concern was expressed that a foundation might become an organization above the independent local churches. The Foundation of the Full Gospel Center began to function in 1971. According to author's observations similar concern was later expressed on organizing the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand.

survey was sent to the member organizations about willingness to change the Constitution of the EFT. No changes in the structure took place.²¹⁴

It seems that since 1990, a change in the understanding about the nature of the EFT has been taking place. Though not clearly expressed, the underlying principle is that the EFT is a co-operative organization for national Churches and various Christian organizations, not a Church itself. The new rules for Local Church Registrations, proposed in 1991, are indicative. It was informed that the EFT aimed to have the individual local churches join together as fellowships or organizations. The individual churches would be registered through the organizations. The EFT would not interfere with any of the governing policies of the churches. However, it was still made possible for a local church to join the EFT as an independent church. In 1997, the new regulations for applying for membership as an independent church were accepted. The regulations are rather detailed, with an obvious hope to discourage local churches from applying for the status of an independent church.²¹⁵

Fluid borders between the denominations, and entire local churches switching denomination have been recorded. On the other hand, there is a popular slogan “*mai thue khana nikai*”. The slogan can be translated as “do not to care for the denominational differences”. This slogan was born in the 1950s and 1960s and became a way to cope with the arrogant foreigners that were competing with each other. It was first recorded in connection to the ministry of Rev. Suk Phongsnoi (Chapter 3.2).

Mai thue khana nikai can mean different things. First, it is used among groups belonging to the same theological tradition. It is easily understood that this is a way to deal with the confusion e.g. among the Pentecostals because of the huge amount of Pentecostal denominations. Secondly, it expresses a wish to abolish the borders between different Protestant bodies, and to create unified structures. However, the division to the EFT and the CCT is seen more or less given. Thirdly, it can be understood as a polite acceptance. It could be translated as: “We belong to different denominations and there is no way to do away with them, but we are brothers and

²¹⁴*Prawat khwam pen ma khong Sahakit Khristian* 1987, 6. In the 1980s the foreign organizations held there separate consultations. The first meeting of the overseas organizations was held 1984. See: Documents for Meeting of the foreign Member Organization of EFT. 22.- 23. November 1984. In the Annual Meetings there have been regional meetings. Various ad hoc Committees have been formed.

²¹⁵Seth Chansong, Local Church Registration with the EFT. 1991 Seth Chansong, the General Secretary of the EFT, is the pastor of Sathupradit (New Life) Church. Kjell Sandvik to the Executive Committee of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. February 14, 1992. Memorandum from a meeting with Seth Chansong. Kjell Sandvik was the Chairman of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. The new rules were informed to be effective from January 1, 1992. It was not certain what happens to a local church which has been registered by the EFT and does not want to join any organization. The rules for registering new independent churches were finally accepted in 1997. See: *Bai samak praphet khrischak (issara)* 15/9/1997. (EFT Membership registration form for an independent church).

sisters in Christ”²¹⁶

There are different kinds of co-operative committees between the CCT, the EFT and the Thailand Baptist Association. (Chapter 4.1.5.)

As summary it can be stated that the independent churches do not seem to be interested in finding a fixed organizational form for unity. Neither they are interested in formulating joint doctrinal declarations. The Constitution of the EFT is seen as a sufficient basis for co-operation. The same concerns co-operation with the CCT.

Organizationally, the unity resembles a network. The individual congregations and denominations may co-operate and interact with various other bodies. However, this co-operation does not lead to fixed organizational forms. The co-operation is based on mutual interests and *ad hoc* arrangements.

4.3.3. Independent churches and traditional Theology

Historically, the independent churches in Thailand have been born for different reasons. They have received influences from different directions, especially American and Asian Evangelicalism and more precisely, American and Korean Pentecostalism.

Doctrinally, there is a clear resemblance between the theological emphases of the independent churches, and in fact, most of the member organizations of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, and the Anabaptist movement mentioned in the confessional writings from the Reformation era. The Anabaptist movement is referred to e.g. in the *Augsburg Confession* from 1530. This resemblance can be seen in the understanding of the Sacraments, in ecclesiology, and in perceptions of the Church History and theological tradition.²¹⁷

²¹⁶Swanson records a discussion in the Evangelical Lutheran Church Thailand, when one of the key leaders of the ELCT expressed as his opinion that being a Lutheran is not important in itself and did not want to emphasize *khana nikai*. HERD #452. According to Swanson, his informant’s views were reminiscent of the attitudes among Thai Pentecostals. HERD #444 In my opinion, this remark at the ELCT should be interpreted in the context of friendly acceptance. Swanson was a guest at the ELCT Headquarters.

²¹⁷Since 1985, I have been conducted a couple of times a course in the theology of the Lutheran Confession to the Bachelor of Theology students at the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education in Bangkok. Quite early both the students and myself noticed that there is a clear resemblance between the doctrinal emphases of most of the groups related to the EFT, especially the independent churches, and the Anabaptists mentioned in the Augsburg Confession. In Augsburg Confession, the Anabaptists are referred as a group in articles on the ministry of the Church (Article 5), on baptism (Article 9), in the Latin text on repentance (Article 12), on civil affairs (Article 16), and on the return of Christ to judgement (Article 17). In addition, there are references to thinking of individual leaders of the

The groups called Anabaptists in the *Augsburg Confession* formed the third segment of the Reformation. The other two segments were the Lutherans and the Swiss Reformation –led by Ulrich Zwingli and later by Jean Calvin. At the present, the Anabaptist movement is also known by the name Radical Reformation. The Anabaptist movement was divided into various groups. Common features were the rejection of infant baptism, the rebaptisms of believers and the practice of organizing them into new congregations, separate from the ‘world’. In their other doctrinal concerns they were quite diverse. It is possible to see the beginnings of the fragmentation in the Protestant Christianity already in the Reformation era. Most Anabaptists were pacifists, some like Thomas Müntzer were involved in the armed struggle in the Peasant Rebellion.²¹⁸

The Anabaptist movement as a whole was persecuted, but some groups survived. Many of them later migrated to North America. There are three present-day groups whose history is directly influenced by the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation Era: the Hutterites, the Amish and the Mennonites.²¹⁹

The Anabaptists prepared confessions. The oldest of these is the *Schleitheim Confession* from the year 1527 produced by the Swiss Brethren. In 1632 the Dutch Anabaptists produced the *Dorthrecht Confession*. A clear continuity has been

Anabaptist groups. See: [Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche](#). Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930. Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, Göttingen. 8.Auflage. 1979, 51-83.

Thaweep Oiwan has made a comparison between the Charismatic movement in Thailand and Luthers’ theology. He deals specially with the Toronto movement, which has been active in Thailand for several years. See: Thaweep Oiwan, *The Study of Charismatic Movement in Thailand Compare to the Doctrine of Luther*. Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong. 1998. Unpublished Master of Divinity dissertation. In 1999, Rev. Thaweep was elected the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand.

²¹⁸Short introduction to the various groups of the Radical Reformation: [Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers Church. The History and Character of Radical Protestantism](#). Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. 1985 , 64-93. First edition 1968. 64-93. There seems to be two kinds of approaches. Others, like Georg H. Williams (*The Radical Reformation*) included those who had not joined the Classical Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. The present day Anabaptists, like Durnbaugh, searching for their roots seek for representative groups. Durnbaugh and Margot Kottelin-Longley argue that Thomas Müntzer can not be considered as the founder of the Anabaptist movement, because he did not keep the principle of non-violence. In retrospect, searching for the roots of the present-day Anabaptist movement this is justified. However, Müntzer and Karlstad were among the first to practice rebaptisms and were part of the whole movement called Anabaptist during the Reformation era. See: [Margot Kottelin-Longley, An Anabaptist Confession of Faith 1527](#). Åbo Akademi University.1997, 14-28. (An unpublished Master of Theology dissertation).

²¹⁹ Kottelin-Longley, 122-123. The Mennonite Central Committee is one of the partner organizations of the CCT (Appendix 3). The Mennonites have had a missionary family working in the Ubon Province in the Northeastern Thailand. This ministry seems not to be connected to the CCT. Authors observations.

observed between these two Confessions and a Mennonite confession from 1995.²²⁰

The influence of the Anabaptist movement is not restricted only to the present day Anabaptist movements. However, the influence on other churches and movements is more complicated to document. Some churches and movements explicitly acknowledge their Anabaptist heritage. In some cases, scholars have observed the influences or resemblance.

The present-day Baptists are divided as whether or not to acknowledge the influence of the Anabaptists. The first Baptist churches were born in England in the beginning of 17th century. The early English Baptists were in contact with the Dutch Mennonites. A group of them actually joined the Mennonites while in exile in the Netherlands.²²¹

Several groups which claimed to have returned to the Apostolic faith and practice were born in the 19th century, mostly in America. These have been called the Restorationists or the Restoration movement. The Church of God (Anderson), a part of this movement, clearly acknowledges its heritage to the Anabaptist movement. As was stated in Chapter 3.2.2., the Church of God is registered as an independent church in Thailand.²²²

The Pentecostal movement was born in America in the early of the 20th century. It does not have direct connections to the Radical Reformation. Its immediate roots were in the Holiness movement. However, resemblance between the Reformation era Anabaptism and the Pentecostal movement has been observed by present-day Anabaptist scholars:

“Pentecostalism is in our century the closest parallel to what Anabaptism was in the sixteenth...”²²³

Sacraments

The independent churches in Thailand usually affirm two sacraments, baptism and the Holy Communion.

²²⁰Kottelin-Longley 1997, 119-122. The modern Confession mentioned by Kottelin-Longley: Confession of Faith; in a Mennonite Perspective. Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1995.

²²¹Durnbaugh 1985, 97-106. James R. Coggins, John Smyth's Congregation. English Separatism, Mennonite Influence and the Elect Nation. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History No 32. Herald Press. Waterloo, Ontario. 1991, 69-114.

²²²Durnbaugh gives a description of several restorationist groups. See: Durnbaugh 1985, 146-172.

²²³Durnbaugh 1985, 173-176. The quote, originally from John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite theologian, page 174.

As was stated in Chapter 4.2.5, the independent churches mostly use the term *phiti sin baptisma* for baptism. The term *phiti* is a general term used for a ceremony, and the term *sin (sila)* is originally used for the Buddhist precepts. The use of the term *phiti sin baptisma*, together with the statements in the Constitutions and Statements of Faith of the independent churches, leads to the conclusion that the independent churches regard baptism as a sign of repentance, as a testimonial of new birth, and as an act of obedience.

As the high number of rebaptism demonstrates, the validity of the baptism has been a debated topic in the Protestant Community in Thailand. It seems evident that the faith of the person receiving the baptism has become the criterion for the validity of the baptism. In the questionnaires in 1987 and 1999 the independent churches informed that they baptize the children of the members only if they themselves ask to be baptized. As the mode of baptism, the independent churches practice immersion. Some churches informed that they may accept practices of the sprinkling or pouring as well. An exception is the Sahathai Church in Takua Pa which is an independent Lutheran church.²²⁴

Most of the independent churches interpret the Holy Communion in a symbolic way. Two terms, *phiti (sin) mahasanit* and *phiti sin raluek* are used. Especially the latter represents the symbolic understanding; it can be translated as the “ceremony of remembrance”. At the present, this term is rather seldom used. Actually, a variety of Thai terms have been used for the Holy Communion. The term *phiti mahasanit*, communion, is the most neutral. The term *phiti sin raluek* clearly represents the symbolic understanding. The 1971 theological dictionary gives also a term *phiti sakkara bucha khophrakhun*, eucharistic sacrifice. However, the Catholics also use the term *sin mahasanit*. It is not possible to conclude for certain from the sources available how the terms have been developed. The term *phiti sin raluek* has been used and possibly developed within the ministry of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.²²⁵

The independent churches follow here the tradition of the Anabaptist movement.

²²⁴Questionnaire 1987, 1999. In 1999 Ubon Church and the Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima informed that they may use sprinkling if the person receiving the baptism so wishes. Both of these churches have a Christian and Missionary Alliance background.

²²⁵Questionnaire 1987, 1999. The term *phiti sin raluek* is used at least by Samchuk Church and Chiang Mai Church, and by the Grace Baptist Church as an optional term. *Pramualsap sanasart lae prachaya* 1971,71-72. The term *sin mahasanit* is used by *Kirati Bunchua, Lak khwam chuea khong chao Khatholic. Borisat rongphim Thai Wattana Phanit* 1986 /2529, 115. A pastor’s manual published by the Christian and Missionary Alliance uses both the *phiti sin raluek* and *phiti sin mahasanit* However, *phiti sin mahasanit* is used as the principal term. See: *Khumue sityaphiban. Chabab kaekhai mai. Kong Khristian Bannasarn* 2521/1978, 86-94. This edition is a revised edition. It is not known when the first edition has been published. It appears to be an abridged version of the CMA Pastor’s Handbook. See: Pastor’s Handbook. Christian Publications, Inc. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 1958.

Durnbaugh refers to the early Anabaptists: “They were convinced that baptism was meaningless before a person had been taught, converted, and become a convinced believer.” The early Anabaptist doctrinal documents and church orders deal also with the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion). It is interpreted as a memorial of Lord’s death.²²⁶

Ecclesiology

The Anabaptists desired to build a Church of pure Christians separate from the world. In their historical setting, this did not mean a church in a non-Christian environment. The Anabaptists considered other people who saw themselves as Christians corrupt. According to the Anabaptist movement the church belonged only to the regenerate as defined by the movement itself. Separation became a central issue. The true church had to be separated not only from the state but also from the apostate Church. The separation concerned both the Catholic Church and the “magisterial Reformation” led Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin and their associates.²²⁷

The situation in Thailand is radically different from the 16th century Europe. However, the Pentecostal movement and the independent churches have carried on some of the emphases of the Anabaptist movement. The first independent churches and the early Pentecostal movement in Thailand were attempts to build a church of true believers very much in the same manner as the Anabaptists did during the sixteenth century. The existing church, the CCT, was seen to be in a spiritual state beyond renewal, and this condition made separation defensible, even necessary.

The independent churches in Thailand seem to have received at least three problems related to ecclesiological thinking from the tradition begun by the Anabaptist movement.

The first concerns the definition of membership, especially the children of the members. Some churches use the term associate members. For most churches, information is not available on how the children of members are taken into account in church membership figures. The understanding of baptism as a testimonial of new birth has led to a situation where the requirements for baptism must be defined in detail. For children of church members, this means age. There is no common definition of the age when children can be baptized. It varies from a vague

²²⁶Durnbaugh 1986, 66, 67. Durnbaugh refers to the Schleithem meeting in 1527, and the earliest known rule of the church (Ordnung) developed in Austria Tyrol about 1527. See: Durnbaugh 1986, 73-74, 222- 223.

²²⁷Durnbaugh refers to the Schleithem Confession that “largely fixed the direction of the movement from that time on” Durnbaugh,1986, 73-74. Durnbaugh uses the term Magisterial Reformation: Durnbaugh 1986, 228-231, 247, 251.

definition that “the child must decide by himself to follow Jesus” to 17 years.²²⁸

The second problem concerns the application of church discipline. The Anabaptist movement had strict conditions for membership. However, disagreements on church discipline led to divisions in the 16th and 17th century Anabaptist movement. In Thailand church discipline has been a debated topic. There is very little information and it is not only the problem of independent churches. Already the early missionaries tried to practice strict discipline. However, the detailed sections on the duties of church members in the constitutions indicate that the discipline is of special importance for the independent churches. In Bangkok the mobility of members has made applying church discipline practically impossible. It is always possible for an individual to move to another church. The disagreement on applying church discipline was an important factor in the disputes leading to establishment of the first independent churches. (Chapter 3.2.) There are indications that later unsuccessful attempts of applying church discipline have led to defections and even establishing new churches. The most clear example is the Ruam Nimit Church. (Chapter 3.4.1.)²²⁹

The third problem concerns the church organization. The Anabaptist movement was suspicious about organized forms of church government and followed a congregational policy. Simultaneously there were attempts to maintain the unity of the movement. Fragmentation, however, took place. Even in the Netherlands, where the movement was more accepted, maintaining unity was not possible and divisions took place. There was thus a tension between the autonomy of the local church and the unity of the movement.²³⁰

The same tension between the autonomy of the local church and maintaining the unity of the movement can be observed in the independent churches in Thailand. The early independent churches followed the congregational policy. Quite soon this policy became problematic. The *Sahaphan Khrischak Thai* (Chapter 3.2.) was the first attempt to organize cooperation between the independent churches. The *Sahaphan* and later the New Life Churches (Chapter 3.4.2) represent an attempt to find a compromise between the autonomy of the local church and the unity of the movement. The cell group churches (Chapter 3.5.) have rejected the idea of autonomy of the local church.

²²⁸Questionnaire 1999. Charoen Phon Church in Chiang Mai informed that the church requires that the children of members must be 17 years old before they can be baptized. Several churches gave the required age as 15. E.g. Sangsan Church used the requirement of being able to decide by him/her self.

²²⁹On division caused by different understandings on church discipline in 16th and 17th century Anabaptism: Coggins 1991, 69-81.

²³⁰Durnbaugh 1996, 4-8. On the origins of the English Baptists: Coggins 32-37. The first English Baptist congregation, Smyths congregation was a “separatist covenant church made up of members from several different places”.

History and traditions

The Anabaptist movement was ambivalent in using the historical argument. The earliest documented debates about the baptism took place in the early 1520s. In the early stages of the debate, the Anabaptists referred to the history of the church to further their case. They argued that the history demonstrated that infant baptism was an invention of the popes, introduced in the fourth or fifth century and, was made the standard practice by pope Nicholas I (858-867). The debate was carried out in Switzerland, but in the early stages German Anabaptist leaders were in correspondence with the Swiss Brethren. Later in the debate, when historical evidences referring to the origin of infant baptism already from the Apostolic era was presented, the Anabaptists rejected the historical argument.²³¹

Similar ambivalence can be seen in contemporary Evangelicalism, especially in Pentecostalism. The history of the Church is used in an eclectic way in building the reputation of the movement. For example, Durnbaugh seeks “representative groups” in order to be able to exclude groups whose views are seen as extreme. In Thailand, Nishimoto presents the history of the “Pentecost”. He uses the experience itself, and not the distinctly Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues as the “initial evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Using this method he manages to present even Martin Luther and John Calvin as pre-Pentecostals.²³²

The independent churches in Thailand see themselves as the representatives of the biblical faith similarly to 16th century Anabaptist movement and the present day Pentecostals. Their understanding about the biblical faith seems to be ahistorical. This is demonstrated in the lack of interest in the history of the Church. The early church Creeds are little known and even less used. The Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima is the only one that in the 1999 survey claimed to use only the Bible and rejected the Creeds. The historical dimension, if used, seems to be restricted to the situation in Thailand. Wan Petchsongkram has critically evaluated the ministry of the mission agencies. (Chapter 3.5.1.). Nanthachai Mejudhon (Chapter 3.4.1) has evaluated the ministry of the early missionaries, especially *Mo Bradley* .

²³¹Kaarlo Arffman, Reformaatio vai restituuio. Historiallinen argumentti reformaattoreiden ja kastaliikkeen väittelyssä lapsikasteen oikeutuksesta. Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia 167. Helsinki. 1995, 19-75, 171-174, 193-205. (The historical argument in the debate between the Anabaptist movement and the Reformers about the infant baptism.)

²³²Durnbaugh 1996, 64-66. Nishimoto 1996, 11-17.

CONCLUSIONS

The rise of the independent churches in Thailand is a phenomenon of the era since the 1970s. It is closely connected to the developments of the Protestant community in Thailand. The first independent churches were born as protest movements within the Church of Christ in Thailand during the first years after the Second World War. The later independent churches are part of the expansion of the Protestant community, which has occurred since 1970. This expansion means the increase in the number of the local churches; for example, roughly eighty percent of the present churches in Bangkok Metropolitan area have been established since 1970. Most of the new churches have been growing slowly; in 1984, sixty percent of them received no more than five new members per year.

Prior to the Second World War, most of the Protestant Christians were members of the Church of Christ in Siam, later called the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). Almost all of the Protestant local churches in Bangkok were affiliated to the CCT. After the war, new mission organizations entered Thailand. Most of these joined the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, established in 1969. It was established as a co-operative organization, and its membership consists of Christian organizations and local churches. Since the 1980s mission-established local churches have been organized as national denominations. Simultaneously, new independent churches have been established. Many of these follow a congregational policy but there are also several new denominations. Regional differences have occurred especially between the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and other regions. The Church of Christ in Thailand has grown in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area partly due to the transfer of Christians from other provinces to Bangkok. Some of the originally Chinese churches have grown throughout the period. Most of the expansion in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area has however taken place among groups not affiliated with the CCT. A special phenomenon has been the emergence of fast-growing independent churches, which expand their network of daughter churches throughout the country.

The independent churches, *khri schak issara*, are Churches (denominations) or congregations (local churches), which have been established by Thai Christians without the consent of organized national Churches or mission agencies. They function as independent bodies without affiliation to organized national Churches or mission agencies. The independent churches have often been established on the initiative of one person or a small group of close associates. The role of the founder is prominent, especially among the cell group churches. Conflicts with existing churches have occasionally developed because of the transfers of members from other churches. The independent churches in Thailand are an urban phenomenon. The independent churches in Bangkok Metropolitan Area differ from the independent churches in other provinces. The Metropolitan churches have established daughter churches throughout

the country while the provincial independent churches usually have daughter churches in the same or in neighboring provinces.

The independent churches have been established by Thai Christians, but a strong external influence can be observed. The campaigns of Dr. John Sung, the relationship to the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries, and the relationship to the International Council of Christian Churches were crucial for the first independent churches. In almost all other cases, the churches have had contacts to non-denominational Evangelical or Pentecostal missionaries during the formative years of the church. Since the 1980s, Asian missionaries have been involved with the independent churches in Thailand. The independent churches should partly be studied in connection to the mission work of the Asian churches.

The understanding that the independent churches are seen as a reaction to the dominance of foreign mission agencies needs modification. The independent churches should rather be seen as part of the growth of the movements and churches separate from the historical Protestant churches. American Evangelicalism has contributed to this process.

The Protestant community in Thailand represents a wide variety of theological thoughts. The doctrinal influence has often come from American Evangelicalism, including the Pentecostal movement. Korean Evangelicalism has influenced especially the models for leadership, the organization of the church, and the patterns of expansion. The mother church - daughter church concept, and the idea of a cell group church (central church) are new ideas received from Korea. A special case is the traces of influence of Roman Catholic ecclesiology in teachings presented by the Romklao Church.

The influence of Buddhism is difficult to document. The independent churches have been dealing more with the popular Buddhism than the Theravada tradition.

The independent churches in Thailand can be divided into four categories according to their origins and patterns of expansion. These categories are: the churches born as protests against the Church of Christ in Thailand; the Evangelical Free Churches, following the congregational policy; the Bangkok centered new denominations; and the cell group churches.

Three patterns of organization and expansion of the church can be observed. The first pattern is found in churches, which emphasize the autonomy of a local church. The first independent churches, protest movements within the CCT, kept to this idea. Later, the churches classified as Evangelical Free Churches in this study have continued the same pattern. Some of them have established daughter churches, but the relationship between the mother church and the daughter churches seems to be rather

loose.

The second pattern has been developed by the cell group churches, exemplified by Romklao Church and the Hope of Bangkok Church. These churches could be called central churches as well. They have established one place of worship and arranged the membership in cell groups for Bible study and prayer. When the membership has grown, the worship services have been held at the same place. The cell groups have been the way to expand. New cell groups have been established all the time. The cell group churches have established a network of daughter churches into the other provinces. These are closely connected to the mother church in Bangkok.

The third pattern has been practiced by the New Life Churches. Their expansion has taken a pattern in opposition to the central churches. These churches have established a network of "grassroot" churches. The churches have been divided as soon as it has been possible, and each new church has become fully self-governed from the very beginning.

The first independent churches and the later ones have clearly differing motives for existence. For the first independent churches, the motive was to establish a true church separate from the Church of Christ in Thailand, which was considered corrupted. The expansion of the church was of secondary interest. Later, especially the cell group churches have been developing their organization suitable for expansion. The driving force for these churches has been evangelistic enthusiasm. It is interesting that the emphasis on expansion and the involvement of the members in evangelization has led to two very different forms of organization.

The cell group churches and the New Life Churches can be seen as adaptations to the social organization of the Thai society. Their form of organization can be seen as attempts toward contextualized organization and leadership patterns. They can be seen as reactions to the earlier dominant American Presbyterian-influenced patterns of the CCT. New arrangements have taken place especially concerning the relations between the offices of a local church. The independent churches have defined the relationship between the offices of preaching and offices of church government differently from the CCT. The organization of the church has been arranged hierarchically, with the pastor being the leader of the church.

The developments of the organization of the cell group churches can be seen as an adaptation to the client-patron pattern, the personified leadership patterns of the Thai society, and the hierarchical structure of the Thai society. The hierarchical structure of the church has been developed to the extreme in the Hope of Bangkok Church.

The New Life Churches represent an adaptation to the Thai behavioral pattern of independence and individualism. This concerns especially the relationship between

the pastors of the New Life Churches. Within their own churches, the pastors are the leaders. A careful balance is maintained between the autonomy of a local congregation and the development of a denomination.

In a predominantly Buddhist country, the church must deal with the questions raised by Buddhism. The vocabulary used by the Christians contains only few explicitly Buddhist terms. The Buddhist terms were avoided from the early years of the Protestant work. It was understood that these terms could not convey the Christian message. In addition, Buddhist terms have been avoided because of the pressure from the Buddhists and the government agencies to use a separate terminology for religions other than Buddhism. This concerns especially the terminology related to the different positions and offices.

The popular Thai Buddhism is a very complex phenomenon. The rationalism found in the Theravada tradition is only part of the religious ideas and practices of Thai people. Different terminologies have been used to describe the elements of the popular Thai Buddhism. The independent churches have mostly been dealing with supernaturalism, superstitious beliefs and practices, and the search for mystical experiences. The power of God over all other powers has become the central content of the evangelistic message.

The Trinitarian doctrine was a debated topic in the first independent churches. Later independent churches identify themselves with the Trinitarian Christianity.

A development can be observed in the ecclesiological thought among the independent churches. The first independent churches and the churches categorized as Evangelical Free Churches see the church merely as a local gathering of believers. The church has little importance for the salvation.

For Romklao Church, the main interest has been in the soteriological significance of the church. The Romklao Church has presented the church as the representative of Christ. This can be seen as a reaction to interest in individual Christian life. In addition, it can be seen as criticism of the American Evangelicalism with its parachurch organizations.

An ambivalence can be found in understanding of membership. People who have made a public profession of faith are called believers. The baptism by immersion is, in most cases, necessary for full membership, and Christians not immersed earlier are immersed before accepted as members.

At least in Romklao Church, the term believer has been used as a synonym for a Christian and a person who has been saved. The decisive factor in defining who is a Christian is the experience, not receiving baptism. Baptism is not mentioned in

connection to salvation. To some extent, the profession of faith has substituted baptism as the point of entrance to the church. Baptism is an obligation which must be fulfilled after receiving Christ; it must be done in a correct way. The meaning of baptism is vague.

It seems that at least in the Romklao Church, the membership is divided into two categories: believers, and the believers baptized in the Holy Spirit. Usually, people in the last group have been baptized with water, but it is not presented as a precondition. The people who have experienced the baptism in Holy Spirit form the actual full membership.

An ambivalence towards the practices of the CCT can be found. By and large, the independent churches have accepted the terminology of the CCT: ordained minister, pastor, and often also elder. In this pattern, ordination has been separated from the office of a pastor. A pastor, ordained or not, has the same rights and duties. Ordination is seen as conferring honor. On the other hand, practices in contrast to the practices of the CCT have been developed. This concerns especially the relation of the pastor to the other offices.

The emergence of the independent churches can be seen as a search for contextually relevant patterns for leadership and expansion of the church. In connection to this search, questions about the theological significance of the church have been raised.

The independent churches in Thailand identify themselves with the Protestant Christianity. They attempt to form their own identity within the Protestantism. The first independent churches saw themselves as the faithful remnant keeping to the pure Christian faith when others had gone astray. Expansion has been an important part of the identity of the later independent churches

The independent churches can be seen as a part of the fragmentation which has increased in the Protestant Christianity since the early 20th century. In spite of the fragmentation the independent churches have also been involved in a search for unity between the Christians. However, this search does not include permanent unified organizational forms. Unity is seen as spiritual fact, and the organizational forms, if needed, resemble a network where the individual churches may interact with others as the need arises.

The independent churches can be seen continuing the theological tradition begun with the Anabaptist movement, presently also called the Radical Reformation, during the Reformation era in the 16th century. This concerns especially the sacraments, ecclesiological emphases and perceptions of the Church History and theological tradition.

APPENDIX 1.
THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN THAILAND, MEMBERS OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN THAILAND 1999

EFT Office June 1999

Name and address

1. Thonburi (Baptist) Church
72/286 Mu 6, Soi Saengphloy 8, Ekachai Road, Bangbon, Bangkhuntian, Bangkok 10150
2. Grace Baptist Church
126 Muban St Louis Soi 3, South Sathon Road, Yannawa, Bkk 10120
3. Bangkok Church
356 Srithaya Road, Phayathai, Bkk 10400
4. Kanchanaburi Church
Soi Praisanee, Saeng Chuto Road, Amphoe Muang Kanchanaburi 71000
5. Samchuk Church
423 Mu 3, Tambol Samchuk, Amphoe Samchuk, Suphanburi 72130
6. Gospel Church of Nakorn Ratchasima
1087 Opposite Withayalai Therdnoo, Suranarai Road, Tambol nai Muang, Amphoe Muang Nakorn Rachasima 30000
7. Uloke Simuen Church
25 Mu 4, Ban Nongsamkwian, Amphoe Thamaka , Kanchanaburi 71120
8. Nonthaburi Baptist Church
86 Mu 6, Pracharat Road, Amphoe Muang, Nonthaburi 11000
9. Phran Kratai Church
47/4 Mu 3, Tambol Phran Kratai, Amphoe Phran Kratai, Kamphaengphet 62110
10. Bangkok Fellowship Church
6 Soi Onnuch 24, Sukhumvit Road 77, Suan Luang, Phrakhanong, Bkk10250
11. Makkasan Church
33 Soi Phranang, Rachawiti Road, Samsennai, Phayathai, Bkk 10400
12. Nongmuang Church
8 Mu 4, Ban Nongmuang, Tambol Thamenchai, Amphoe Lamplaimas, Buriram 31130
13. Gospel Church of Ubon Rachathani
71 Upalisan Road, Tambol Nai Muang, Amphoe Muang, Ubon Rachathani 34000
14. Chiang Mai Thai Church
139 Kaeunawarat Road, Tambol Nongleng, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50000
15. Huarin Thai Church
144 Mu 1, Ban Huarin, Tambol Thungsatok, Amphoe Sanpatong, Chiang Mai 50120
16. Church of God
28 Muban Suanson Soi 4, Sukhaphiban 3 Road, Bangkapi, Bkk 10140
17. Yasothon Church
22/8-11 Soi Thesaban, Chaengsanit Road, Tambol Nai Muang , Amphoe Muang, Yasothon 35000
18. Krung Thai Church
234/39-41, Sinsayam Nivet, Asoke-Dindaeng Road, Huay Khwang, Bkk 10310
19. Songphai Church
5 Mu 12, Tambol Srisakrabue, Amphoe Ongkhrak, Nakorn Nayok 26120
20. Banhaen Church
131 Mu 3, Banhaen, Tambol Phatho, Amphoe Wangpha, Nan 55140
21. Group of Chinese Speaking Christians
19/20 Thanon Wichanon Soi 14, Tambol Chang Noi, Ampoe Muang Chiang Mai 5000
22. Kaenoi Church
Mu 2, Ban Kaenoi, Tambol Muangna, Amphoe Chiang Dao, Chiang Mai 50178
23. Biangluang Church

- Soi 8 Mu 2, Tambol Muangna, Amphoe Chiang Dao, Chiang Mai 50178
24. Arunothai Church
30/4 Mu 4, Ban Arunothai, Tambol Muangna, Amphoe Chiang Dao, Chiang Mai 5000
 25. Ban Mai nai Muang Loei Church
35/7 Thanon Wisutthep, Tambol Kudpong, Amphoe Muang, Loei 4200
 26. Huay Kangpla Church
5 Mu 5, Ban Huay Kangpla, Tambol Patueng, Amphoe Mae Chan Chiang Rai 57110
 27. Santisuk Church, Mae Hong Son
47 Mu 12, Ban Santisuk, Thanon Chiang Mai – Mae Hong Son, Tambol Mae Lanluang, Amphoe Mae La Noi, Mae Hong Son 58120
 28. Chiang Mai Church
364 Charoen Rat Road, Tambol Faham, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 5000
 29. Khon Kaen Chinese Church
70/12 Thanon Klangmuang, Amphoe Muang, Khon Kaen 40000
 30. Charoenphon Church
26 Kaeu Nawarat Road, Tambol Faham, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50000
 31. Muang Kanchanaburi Church
113 Soi Taopoon, Thanon Saeng Chuto, Amphoe Muang, Kanchanaburi 71000
 32. Sathupradit New Life Church
265/262 Soi Thawee Wattana, Sathupradit Road, Bkk 10120.
 33. Suan Phlu New Life Church
245 Akarnsongkhro Soi 16, Thung Mahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120.
 34. Muang Thai Church
6/17 Wat Phaiton, Phaholyothin Road, Samsen Nai, Phyathai, Bkk 10400
Rev. Dr. Nanthachai Mejudhon
 35. Trad Church
227 Mu 2, Soi Buatree, Tambol Wang Krachae, Trad 2300
 36. Daokhanong New Life Church
17/40 Daokhanong-Chomthong Road, Bangkho, Bangkhunthian, Bkk 10150.
 37. Romkiao Church
632/1 Soi Kunnathi, Rachada Phisek Road, Huaykhwang, Bkk 10321.
Rev. Wan Petchsongran
 38. Ubol Church (Khrischak khong Phra Jesu Khris, Ubol)
13 Mu 5, Tambol Laodaeng, Amphoe Muang, Ubon Ratchathani 43000
 39. Nong Kichitsamran Church
122/2 Mu 1, Thanon Pracharat, Kungkradatphanna, Amphoe. Nong Ki, Buriram 31210
 40. Gospel Church of Kantang
52 Thanon Nakhai, Amphoe Kantang, Trang 92110
 41. Phatai Church
Mu 9, Ban Phatai, Tambol Thaton, Amphoe Mae Noi, Chiang Mai 50280
 42. Sanlao Thai Church
88 Mu 3, Ban Sanlao, Tambol Sathan, Amphoe Bua, Nan 55120
 43. Nakorn Lampang Church
640/1 Mu 8, Muban Suksawat, Tambol Phrabat, Amphoe Muang, Lampang 52000
 44. Salvation Church
51/5 Soi Pracha Narumit, Bangpho, Dusit, Bkk 10800.
Rev. Charnchai Isaramala
 45. Rom Phrakhun Mae Charim Church
244 Mu 4, Ban Nada, Tambol Nongdaeng, Amphoe Mae Charim, Nan 55170
 46. Ko Da Church
391 Mu 2, Tambol Sala, Ampoe Ko Da, Lampang 52130
 47. Bangkhunthian New Life Church.
88/280-282, Suan 1, Muban Keha haeng Chat, Bangkhunthian, Bkk 10150
 48. Sang San Church
201 Soi Suksawitthaya, North Sathorn Road, Bkk 10500.
 49. Phonprasart Church

- 19 Mu 1, Thanon Sai Suphan – Chainat, Ban Wang Samphaolom, Tambol Nangbuat, Amphoe Doem Bangnangbuat, Suphanburi 72120
50. Fa Muang Thai Church
64/2 Mu 13, Muban Sennanikom 1, Soi Sennanikom 1, Phaholyothin Road, Ladphrao, Bkk 10220.
Mr Kriangsak Wanitwit.
51. Ban Kudkhaopoon Church
Thanon Rat Phattana Mu 3, Ban Kudkhaopoon, Tambol Khamtao, Amphoe Muang, Nakorn Phanom 48000
52. Phra Jesu Khrist Muang Patthaya Church
64/7 Mu 9, Soi Chaiyaphruek 2, Tambol Na Chomthian, Amphoe Banglamung, Choburi 20260
53. Sahathai Takua Pa Church
275 Thanon Sri Takau Pa, Amphoe Takua Pa, Phangga 82110
54. Ban Ruamchit Church
Mu 6, Ban Ruamchit, Tambol Nonglom, Amphoe Dokdamtai, Phayao 56120
55. Peace of Bangkok Church
70/10 Soi Ladphrao 87, Bangkok, Bkk 10310
Rev. Dr. Paithoon Hatamart
56. Phrakhun (Grace) Church
58/1 Mu 5, Ban Rongpo, Tambol Banglamung, Amphoe Banglamung, Choburi 20150
57. Bangchak New Life Church
701/172-3 Muban Aur-amornsuk 3 Sukhumvit 101, Bangchak, Phrakanong, Bkk 10260.
58. Siloh Presbyterian Church, Chiang Mai
3 Soi 7, Muendamphrakot, Tambol Chang Phueak, Amphoe Muang, Chiangmai 50300
59. Sion Church
75 Sukhumvit 95/1 Rd., Bangchak, Phrakanong, Bkk 10250
60. Thaweepon Church
178/1 Mu 5, Ban Kluay, Tambol Ban Krang, Amphoe Sri Prachan, Suphanburi 72140
61. Jin Samphan Khrunghthep Church
39-43 Sukhumvit 101/1 Rd., Phrakanong, Bkk 10250.
62. Ruamjai Church
30 Mu 6, Thanon Sai Mai Soi 8, Tambol Khuean Phak, Amphoe Phrao, Chiang Mai 50190
63. Phantakit Chiang Mai Church
4/1 Thanon Soemsuk, Tambol Chang Phueak, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50300
64. Thalitha Koom Church
72 Mu 6, Ban Sobpongtae, Tambol Pangmu, Amphoe Muang, Mae Hong Son 58000
65. Khao Dee Church
939/11 Thanon Ruamchitthawai, Tambol Wiang, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Rai 57000
66. Thung Song Church
525 Thanon Thung Song – Nabon, Tambol Pakphraek, Amphoe Thung Song, Nakhon Sri Thammarat 80110
67. Ruam Nimit Church (Vision Gospel)
42 Soi Ladphrao 99, Ladphrao Rd, 1990 Bangkok, Bkk 10240
Rev. Nirut Chankong
68. Ban Suanson Church
174/1 Soi Chokchai Ruammit, Wiphawadi-Rangsit Rd., Huaykwang, Bkk 10310
Rev. Kalai Lai
69. Chiang Mai Baptist Church
164/2-3 Mu 1, Soi Chang Khiean, Thanon Thuaykaeu, Tambol Chang Phueak, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 5000
70. Salom nai Krungthep Church
3185 Thiamruammitr Road, Samsen Nok, Huaykwang Bkk 10310
71. Pha Daeng Chiang Mai Church
9 Mu 6, Ban Pha Daeng, Tambol Nongbua, Kingamphoe Chairakan, Chiang Mai 50310

72. Phra Kittikhun nai Ong Phra Jesu Khrist Chao Church
3. Thanon Kaeu Nawarat, Soi 3/1, Tambol Wat Ket, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50000
73. Church of Jesus Christ
Soi Soonwichai 14 (3), New Petchaburi Road, Huay Kwang, Bkk 10310.
74. Santiphap Church
710 Muban Rachaniwet Soi 24, Prachauthit Rd., Samsen Nok, Huaykhwang, Bkk 10310.
75. Holy of Holies Church.
P.O.Box 5 Minburi, Bkk 10510
A. Nakorn Wechsupaporn

**APPENDIX 2.
PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN THE BANGKOK METROPOLITAN
AREA 1997**

CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAILAND

VI District

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. First Church (Samray). Soi Chiwit Ruam Sasana,
Charoen Nakhorn Road,Thonburi Bkk 10600. | 1857 |
| 2. Second Church (Samyan). 40 Rama 4 Road, Siphraya,
Bangrak, Bkk 10500 | 1878 |
| 3. Fourth Church (Suebsampantawong). 5 Sri Wiang Road,
Bangrak, Bkk 10500 | 1902 |
| 4. Fifth Church (Wattana). 67 Soi Wattana, Sukhumvit
Road Soi 19, Phrakanong, Bkk 10110 | 1922 |
| 5. Bookalow Church. 324 /32 Trok Thanin, Mahaisawan
Road, Thonburi, Bkk 10600 | 1975 |
| 6. Thiansang Church. 1 Maha Nakorn Road, Siphraya, Bangrak,
Bkk 10500 | |
| 7. Phrapradaeng Church (Pornprasert). 84 Village 3,
Puchaosamingphrai, Samroong Tai, Phrapradaeng,
Samutprakarn 10130 | |
| 8. House of Christ Church (Ban Phra Khrist). 6/21 Soi 25, Ladphrao Rd
Ladyao, Bangkhen Bkk 10900 | 1982. |
| 9. Phrapradaeng Worshipgroup. Phrapradaeng Leprocy Hospital
Phrapradaeng, Samutprakarn 10270 | |
| 10. International Church (Expatriate). 328 Phythai, Bangkok 10400 | |
| 11. German Church (Expatriate). 75 Soi 53, Sukhumvit
Road, Phrakhanong Bkk 10110 | |
| 12. Korean Church (Expatriate)
300 Soi Seree 9, Suwanriang Road, Prawet, Bkk 10250 | |

VII District

- | | |
|--|------|
| 13.Saphan Luang Church (Yellow Bridge Third Church),
586 Rama 4 Road, Bangrak, Bkk 10500 | 1896 |
| 14. Sathorn Church. 274 North Sathorn Road, Bangrak,
Bkk 10500 | 1932 |
| 15. Zion Church. 197 Trok Tonphoo, New Road, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 | |
| 16. Phrapradaeng Church. 219/1 Village 8, Soi Sawangsilp,
Suksawat Road, Bangphueng, Phrapradaeng, Samutprakarn 10130 | |
| 17. Klong Toey Church. 2291/5-9, Rama 4 Road, Klong
Toey, Bkk 10110 | |
| 18. Tharnphraporn Church. 74 Soi Wachirathamsathie 6, Sukhumvit 101/1,
Phrakanong, Bkk 10260 | |
| 19. Ramkhamhaeng 2 Preaching place. 56/2 Niran Residence, Khrongkan 2
Akhan A, Dokmai, Prawet,10260 | |
| 20. Salatham Patthanakarn. 212/154 M.6 Pravet, Bkk 10250 | |
| 21. Korean Presbyterian Church. P.O.Box 1013 Bkk 10501 | |

XII District

22. Maitrichit Church. 591 Maitrichit Road, July 22 Circle, Pomprab, Bkk 10100 1837
23. Bethel Church. 71/1 Soi Prongjai, Sri Bamphen Road, Thungmahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 1956
24. Ruamchit Church. 73-75 Soi Suwansawat, Rama 4 Road Thung Mahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 1963
25. Sacred Light Baptist Church (Saengsawang). 689 Soi Surao, Issaraphap Road, Thonburi, Bkk 10600 1967
26. Christian Fellowship Church (Samakkhitham). 4/4 Chindathawit, Rama 4 Road, Bangrak, Bkk 10500
27. Community Church (Prachakhom) 175 Prachasongkro 23 Rd Dindaeng Bkk 10320 1966
28. Taopoon Maitrichit Church. 41 Rimtang Rodfai Rd., Bangsue, Bkk 10800 1977
29. Talad Phlu Baptist Church. 49 Therdtai Road, Talad Phlu Road, Talad Phlu, Thonburi Bkk 10600 1983
30. Charoen Krung (New Road) Maitrichit Church. 2823/1 New Road, Tungmahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120
31. Thonburi Christian Center. 689 Soi Surao, Issaraphap Road, Thonburi, Bkk 10600
32. Sweet Home Christian Center. 1139/29 Soi 23. Taksin Road, Thonburi, Bkk 10600
33. Ekkachai Baptist Church. 65/120-124 M.3, Soi Ekkachai, Ekkachai Rd. Bangkhuntian, Bkk 10150
34. Saengphrakun Church. 1008/28-30 Muban Sripetch, Soi 10 Petchkasem 106 Rd., Nongkarnplu, Nongkam, Bkk 10160
35. The Maitrichit Langsuan Baptist Church. 87/1 Langsuan Soi 5 Rd., Lumpini, Patumwan, Bkk 10330

EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN THAILAND

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Established 1994 In cooperation with the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. 1976.

1. Peace Lutheran Church (Santitham). 175/28-30 Soi Amon, Nang Linchi Road, Thungmahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 1977
2. Immanuel Lutheran Church. (former Kluay Nam Thai) 1869-1875 Soi Saen Suk Tai (Uthai Farm), Rama 4 Road, Klong Toey, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110 1977
3. Lad Phrao Church. 50/153 Soi 58 Lad Phrao Road, Bkk 10310 1981
4. Samroong Lutheran Church. 1415 Mu 2, Soi Waddansamrong, Sukhumvit Road, Samutprakan 10270 1982
5. Grace Lutheran Church (Phra Karunakhun, Hua Mark). 3 Soi 48, Ramkhamhaeng Road, Hua Mark, Bangkok, Bkk 10240 1984
6. Laksi Lutheran Church. 43/519 Muban Amarinivet, Phaholyothin Road, Bangkok, Bkk 10220 1985
7. Phasee Charoen Good News Church. 74/9 Mu 14, Soi Yimprayoon, Bangwa, Phasee Charoen, Bkk 10160 1986
8. Don Muang Church. 310/971 Muban Pincharoen, Khroengkarn 3, Songprapa Road, Bangkok, Bkk 10210 1988
9. Lutheran Church Sukhumvit 50. 1188 Soi Roem Charoen, Sukhumvit 50 Rd., Klontoe, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10250 1991
10. Church 11. 120/217 Soi 6 Muban Manceyawin, Sukhumvit 101/1, Bkk 10260 1993

Korea Presbyterian Mission. Registered with the EFT 1980.

1. Halleluja Presbyterian Church . 18/25-27 Soi Lardplakao,
Raminthra Road, Bangkok, Bkk 10220

Gospel Church of Thailand

In co-operation with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1929)

1. Mahaphon Church. 24 Soi Ruamsanti, Pradipat Road, Samsen
Nai Bkk 10400
2. Mahaphon Sukhumvit Church. 42 Soi 10, Sukhumvit Road, 1984
Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110
3. Mahaphon Rachada Church. Muban Thairat, Pracharat- 1984
upatham Road, Huay Khwang, Bkk 10310
4. Evangelical Church (Expatriate). 42 Soi 10, Sukhumvit
Road, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110
5. 1st Mong Church. 3695/12 Lumsalee, Ramkhamhaeng Rd., Huamark
Bkk 10240
6. Mahaphon Ladkrabang Church. 108/656 GKC Romkiao Song 8,
Klongsongtonnu, Ladkrabang, Bkk 10520
7. Mahaphon Sansern Church. 121 M.24 Sukhapibal 1, Soi Suwanprosit 3,
Buengkhum, Klongkhum, Bkk 10230
8. Mahaphon Nongkhaem Church. 77/192 Ban Hunsu, Petckkasem Rd.,
Nongkamplu, Nongkhaem, Bkk 10160

Associated Churches in Thailand

In co-operation with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (1951)

1. Klongchan Church. 1256 Soi 44, Sukhaphiban 1, Klongchan, 1981
Bangkapi, Bkk 10240
2. Hua Mark Church. 21 Soi 35, Ramkhamhaeng Road, Hua Mark, 1981
Bkk 10240
3. Prachanivate Church. 40/2943 Sai 12 Road, Muban 1984
Prachanivate 3, Gamwongwan, Nonthaburi 11000
4. Rodanant Church. 64/34 Soi Rodanant 1, Sukhaphiban 2
Road, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240
5. Sachatham Krungthep Church. 1468/7 Pak Soi Mingkhwan,
Prachasongkhro Road, Huay Khwang, Bkk 10400
6. Prachauthit Samphan New Life Church. 450 Mu 8, Prachauthit
Road, Ratburana, Bkk 10140
7. Haeng Cheevit Church. 50/773 M.3. Soi Lasarn, Sukhumvit 105 Rd.,
Phrakanong, Bkk 10260
8. Sampan Ruamphraporn Church. 141/350 Soi 27 Prachra-uti Rd., Ratburana
Bkk 10140
9. Phrasila Church. 21 Soi Ramkhamhaeng 35 (Welco), Huamark,
Bkk 10240
10. Bangna Group. 211/25 Muban Pairo, Bangna-Trad, Bangna, Bkk 10260
11. Burapa Group. 87/419 M.5 Soi Wat Paikaey, Burapa 18, Songprapa Rd.,
Sigan, Donmuang, Bkk 10210
12. Good News Center. 39/241 Thawon Town House, Ramintra KM.8 Rd.,
Jarakabua, Bkk 10230

Korea Global Mission in Thailand (1987)

1. Grace Church (Phrakaruna). 2098/118, Muban Pricha, Soi 26,
Ramkhamhaeng Road, Hua Mark, Bangkok, Bkk 10240
2. Hosanna Church. 211/6 Muban Sammakon, Sukhaphiban 3 Road,
Saphan Soong, Bangkok, Bkk 10240
3. Pornphaiboon Church. 34/23 M.10 Muban 34, Soi Chokchai 4 Ladprao Rd.,
Ladprao, Bkk 10230
4. Prathip Minburi Church. 49/26 Muban Leela 2 Nimitmai Rd., Minburi,
Bkk 10510

Full Gospel Churches in Thailand

In co-operation with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission (1946)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Thonburi Full Gospel Church. 1217/1 Charoenrat Road,
Klongtong, Klongsam, Bkk 10600 | 1950 |
| 2. Bangkhac Church. 577, Mu 10, Soi 5 Laksong, Nongkhaem,
Bkk 10160 | 1978 |
| 3. Nonthaburi Full Gospel Church. 142/ 58/36 Sanambinnam Road,
Thasai, Amphoe Muang, Nonthaburi 11000 | 1982 |
| 4. New Life Center. 486/23, Mu 11, Thanon Ratburana,
Ratburana, Bkk 10140 | 1982 |

Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand

In co-operation with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (1961)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Jai Samarn Church. 10-12 Sukhumvit Soi 6,
Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110 | |
| 3. Praise Church (Sadudee). 3131/53-54 Soonkarnka Ubonsi , Sukhumvit
101/1 Rd., Phrakhanong, Bkk 10260 | 1983 |
| 3. Prachasan Church. 15/12-13 Soi Prachasan, Din Daeng
Road, Phayathai, Bkk 10400 | 1975 |
| 4. Pakred Church. 56/14 Mu 5, Tambon Pakred, Amphoe Pakred,
Nonthaburi 11120 | |
| 5. Bang Phlee Church. 11/42-43 Soi Foo 1, Theparak Road,
Bang Sauthong, Bang Phlee, Samutprakarn 10540. | 1987 |

Thailand Assemblies of God

In co-operation with the Assemblies of God Field Fellowship Thailand (1968)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Seri Village Church. 1/1 Seri Road 5, Muban Seri 2,
Ramkhamhaeng Road, Bangkok Bkk 10250 | 1973 |
| 2. Romyen Church. 10 Soi Romyen, Phattanakarn Road, Suan
Luang, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10250 | 1975 |
| 3. Happyland Church. 503/1 Happyland, Klogchan, Bangkok,
10240 | 1981 |
| 4. Pracharuamjai Church. 95/3 Soi Pracharuamchai,
Charansanitwong Road, Bangkok Noi, Bkk 10700 | 1982 |
| 5. Santisuk Church. 4/88 Phetkasem Road 69 (Inthabal),
Laksong, Nongkhaem, Bkk 10160 | 1983 |
| 6. Thippawan Church (Sri Pharak). 420/91 Muban Thippawan 1,
Theparak Road, Bangmuang, Samroong Nua,
Samutprakarn 10270 | 1983 |
| 8. International Christian Assembly. 196 Soi Jasoob 1,
Ekamai, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110 | 1984 |

9. Din Daeng Good News Church. 2508/34, Flat 1, 8th floor,
Asoke-Din Daeng Road, Samsen, Bkk 10400
11. Good News Church. Taiarkarnflat 18 (4 Chan), Asoke-Dindaeng Rd.,
Samsen Phrayathai, Bkk 10400
12. Lakchaicheevit Church. P.O.Box 201 Samsennai, Phrayathai, Bkk 10400
13. Phantakit 1. Krungthep Church. 96/20 Soi Kusonsin,
Suphawut Rd., Bangna, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10260
14. Tha Rua Klongtoey Church
110-116 Damrong Latthaphipat Rd. Klongtoey, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110
15. Pratumuang Church. P.O.Box 1050 Kasetsart, Bkk 10903
16. Romyen Thonburi Church. 68/45 M.4 Petchkasem Rd., Bangkhae,
Phasee Charoen, Bkk 10160

Church of God World Missions (Khana Khrischak Plukchit) (1978)

1. Plukchit Church. 6/247 Soi Plukchit, Rama
4 Road, Lumpkini, Bangkok 10500 1982
2. Plukchit Church, Thung Song Hong. 308/7 Wiphawadee-
Rangsit Road Don Muang, Bkk 10220
3. Plukchit Laksi Church. 135/13 M.2 Chaengwattana Rd., Tungsonghong,
Donmuang, Bkk 10210

Other EFT registered churches

**Journey to the Light
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod**

1. Journey Into Light Church. 29/186 Soi Muangthon 1, Chaeng Wattana Rd.
Donmuang, Bkk 10210

The Anglican Episcopal Church in Thailand

2. Christ Church. 11 Convent Rd. Silom, Bangrak, Bkk 10500 (Expatriate)
3. Christ Church. 11 Convent Rd. Silom, Bangrak, Bkk 10500 (Thai)

Seo Moon World Mission Foundation in Thailand

4. Church of Love in Bangkok. 335-337 Soi 21 Muban Sinthorn
Happyland, Klongchan, Bangkok, Bkk 10240
5. Church of Love in Thunsigan. 501/1 M.3 Taechatunga Rd. Thunsigan,
Donmuang Bangkok 10210

World Wide Evangelization Crusade

6. Siam Bangkok Church. 3 Soi 13 Muban Seree 1 Huamark,
Bangkapi Bkk 10250

Christ to Thailand Mission

7. Namphrathai Church. 55/6 Udomkiat, Suthisan Rd., Huaykwang,
Bkk 10310.

Thailand Mission Evangelistic Center

8. Udomsuk Church. 52/3 Soi Chinomonnivet, Sukhumvit 103,
Nong Bon, Phrakhanong, Bkk 1260 1984

Others

9. Covenant Church. P.O.Box 6 Chankasem, Ratchadaphisek, Jatujak
Bkk 10904. A. Gregg T. Nicholson
10. Bangkok Church of the Nazarene. 52/19-20 Ramkhamhaeng (Sukhapiban 3)

- Klongchan, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240. Rev. Sawat Hahom
11. Bangplat Church. 31/103 Soi Maneeanuson, Ratchavithree Rd. Phrakanong, Bkk 10260
 12. Bankana Church. 4/96 Muban Kosomsamakkee 2 Srikan, Donmuang Bkk 10210. A Rasamee Ponchan
 13. Baptist Bangken Church. 2172/146-147 Soi 36, Phahoyothin, Bangken Bkk 10900. A.Pornsak Sukachintanakan
 14. Baptist Ladphrao Church. 1737/40-41 beside Soi Ladphrao 45 Huaykwang, Bkk 10240
 15. Bethel Thai Church. 956/278-9 (B) Soi Tharagon 3, Sukhapiban 3, Minburi, Bkk 10510. A. Ruth Yong Ja Song
 16. Phrakarunatikun Bangjak Church. 1266/1 Sukhumvit Rd. Soi 103, Phrakanong, Bkk 10260
 17. Phrarasamee Church. 99/239-240 Soi Mamin Condotown, Sihaburanukit Rd., Meanburi, Bkk 10150. Rev Kiangporn Park
 18. Phrasiri Church. 128/84 Muban Srikarin, Soi 24 Ramkamhaeng, Huamark, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240
 19. Rhema Church. 1213/91 Town in Town 5/2, Ladprao 86, Bangkapi Bkk 19319. A. Sujin Nidanonthaveewat
 20. Ladkrabang Church. 18/3 Chalermkrung Rd. Ladkrabang, Bkk 10520 A. Sea Kwan O
 21. Namporn Church. P.O.Box 240, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240
 22. Phraphorn Samakkhee (Blessing of Fellowship) Church. 40/91-92 Rama 2 Road, Bangmod, Bang Khuntian, Bkk 10150
 23. Songphai Church. 7/102 Soi Pathumthip, Krungthep-Non Rd. , Bangsue, Dusit Bkk 10800. A. Chamlong Shassanon
 24. Tammakittam. 262/6 Sukumvit 71 Rd., Klongtan, Bkk 10110. Rev. Kwang Chu Chin
 25. Taphra Church. 169/170 Charansanitwong 12, Thaphra, Bkk 10600. A. Sawang Buayen
 26. Suntisuk Community Church. 3750/9 Soi Ladprao 146/1, Klongchan, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240. Rev. Steven Kable
 27. Immanuel Mission. 1-3 Soi Prommit, Sukhumvit 39 Rd., Bkk 10110 Rev. Lee Kiu Sik.

Independent churches

1. Bangkok Church. (3) 356 Sri Ayutthaya Road, Phayathai, Bkk 10400. Rev. Dr. Charan Ratanabutra 1948
2. Church of God. Soi Phumchit, Rama 4 Road, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10110. Rev. Silawech Kanjanamukhda 1975
- 2.1. Church of God, Bangkapi. 28 Mu 4, Muban Suanson, Sukhapibal 3 Road., Klongchan, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240

Evangelical Free Churches

3. Thonburi Baptist Church. (1) 72/286 Mu 6 Soi Saenphloy, Ekchai Road, Bangbon, Bangkokhuthian Bkk 10150. Dr Lim Yok Chair 1966
4. Grace Baptist Church. (2) 126 Soi St. Louis 3 Sathon Road. Bkk 10210 Rev. Kiattisak Sirirpanadon
5. Nonthaburi Baptist Church. (8) 86 Mu 6, Pracharat Road, Amphoe Muang, Nonthaburi 11000
6. Bangkok Fellowship Church. (10) 56 Soi Onnuch 24 Sukhumvit Soi 77, Phrakhanong, Bkk 10250. Rev. Somkiat Kittiphong 1979
7. Church of Thai Capital (Krung Thai) (18). 234/39-41 Sin Siam Nivet 1973

- Dindaeng, Huaykhwang, Bkk 10310. Mr Tsui Ing Tin
- 8 .Salvation Church (44). 51/5 Soi Pracha Narumit, Bangpho, Dusit, 1986
Bkk 10800. Rev Charnchai Isaramala
- 9 .Sang San Church (48). 201 Soi Suksawitthaya, North Sathorn
Road, Bkk 10500. Mr Manot Jaengmuk
10. Fa Muang Thai Church (50). 64/2 Mu 13, Muban Sennanikom 1, 1983
Soi Sennanikom 1, Phaholyothin Road, Ladphrao, Bkk 10220.
Mr Kriengsak Wanitwit.
11. Peace of Bangkok Church (55). 70/10 Soi Ladphrao 87, Bangkapi, Bkk 10310
Rev. Dr. Paithoon Hatamart
12. Sion Church (59). 75 Sukhumvit 95/1 Rd., Bangchak, Phrakanong,
Bkk 10250
13. Jin Samphan Khrungthep Church (61). 39-43 Sukhumvit 101/1 Rd.,
Phrakanong, Bkk 10250. A. Lin Choon Sarn
14. Ban Suanson Church (68) . 174/1 Soi Chokchai Ruammit, Wiphawadi-
Rangsit Rd. Huaykwang, Bkk 10310. Rev. Kalai Lai
15. Salome Nai Krunghthep Church (70). 3185 Thiamruammitr Road, Samsen Nok,
Huaykhwang Bkk 10310
16. Church of Jesus Christ (73). 71 Soi Soonwichai 14 (3), New Petchaburi Road
Huay Kwang, Bkk 10310. A. Wichian Sawatwong
17. Santiphap Church (74). 710 Muban Rachaniwet Soi 24, Prachauthit Rd.,
Samsen Nok, Huaykhwang, Bkk 10310. Rewat Thepchak
18. Holy of Holies Church. P.O.Box 5 Minburi, Bkk 10510
A. Nakorn Wechsapaporn

New Life Churches

19. Makkasan Church (11), 33 Soi Phranang, Rachawithi Road, 1971
Samsen Nai Phayathai, Bkk 10400.
20. Sathupradit New Life Church (32). 265/262 Soi Thawee Wattana, 1977
Sathupradit Road, Bkk 10120. Mr Seth Chansong
21. Suan Phlu New Life Church (33). 245 Akarnsongkhro Soi 16, Thung 1974
Mahamek, Yannawa, Bkk 10120. Mr Prasert Kusawadee
22. Daokhanong New Life Church (36). 17/40 Daokhanong-Chomthong Road,
Bangkho, Bangkhunthian, Bkk 10150. Mr. Thawan Areeyat
23. Bangkhunthian New Life Church. 88/280-282, Suan 1, Muban Keha 1983
haeng Chat, Bangkhunthian, Bkk 10150. A. Pirom Ruamsantiy
25. Bangchak New Life Church (57). 701/172-3 Muban
Aur-amornsuk 3 Sukhumvit Bangchak, Phrakanong,
Bkk 10260. Mr. Khamsing Ruamwong

Emerging denominations

25. Muang Thai Church (34). 6\17 Wat Phaiton, Phaholyothin Road, 1973
Samsen Nai, Phayathai, Bkk 10400. Rev. Dr. Nantachai Mejudhon
- 25.1. Muang Thai Rungiran Church. P.O.Box 50 Phrakanong, Bkk 10110
A. Punya Chochoicharn
26. Ruam Nimit Church (Vision Gospel) (67). 42 Soi Ladphrao 99 1990
Ladphrao Rd, Bangkapi, Bkk 10240

Cell Group Churches

27. Romklao Church (37). 632/1 Soi Kunnathi, Rachada Phisek 1979
Road, Huaykhwang, Bkk 10321. Rev Wan Petchsongran

THAILAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

In co-operation with the Thailand Baptist Mission (1949)

1. Grace Baptist Church (Phrakhun). 16 Soi Wattana (Soi 19)
Sukhumvit Road, Bkk 10110 1951
2. Immanuel Baptist Church. 26 Soi Somprasong 2, Phetchaburi
Road, Phyathai, Bkk 10400 1953
3. Antioch Baptist Church. 8 Yuk Road 1, Suan Mali,
Bkk 10100 1960
4. New Hope Baptist Church. 298 Soi Phutasot, Surawong
Road, Bkk 10500 1960
5. Phrakhanong Baptist Church. 11 Soi Santisuk (Soi 38),
Sukhumvit Road, Bkk 10110 1963
6. Saphan Mai Don Muang Church. 3/512 Soi Thahanakat 1
Klongthanon, Bangkhen, Bkk 10900 1965
7. New Creation Church (Niramit). 44 Thewes
Soi 3, Krung Kasem Road, Bkk 10200 1965
8. Bagna Church. 182 Soi Wat Bagna Nai, Phrakhanong,
Bkk 10110 1970
9. Promise Church (Phra Sanya, Paknam). 308 Sukhumvit
Road, Samutprakarn 10270 1973
10. Huay Khwang Church. 1/7 Soi Nathong,
Samsen Nok, Phyathai, Bkk 10400 1981
11. New Vision Church (Nimit Mai). 473 Sri Ayutthaya
Road, Phyathai, Bkk 10400 1982
12. Saeng Khom Baptist Church. 1618 Soi Rongnan, Trok Chan
Saphan Sam, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 1983
13. Antioch Ladphrao Baptist Church. 28 Soi Chantima 2,
Ladphrao 80 Rd. Bangkapi, Bangkok 10310
14. Nimitmai Thonburi B.C. 40/337 Moo 10 Amornchainivet 1,
Rama 2 Rd., Bkk 10150
15. Itsaraphap Baptist Church. 1029 Itsaraphap Rd., Bangkok Yai,
Thonburi, Bkk 10600
16. Tabernacle Baptist Church (Phlabphla). 100/45 Muban Sinpatthanathanee,
Pracharnivet 1, Ladyao, Chatuchak, Bkk 10900
17. Faith Baptist Church. 90/3 Senanikhon 1, Phahonyothin Rd.,
Ladprao Bkk 10230
18. Muang Thong Church. 210/302 Mu 6, Muang Thong 2/2 Soi 8, Prawet,
Bkk 10250
19. Calvary Baptist Church (Maikangkhen. Expatriate).
86 Soi 2, Sukhumvit Road, Bkk 10110

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF THAILAND (1906)

1. Bangkok Adventist Hospital Church. 430 Phitsanuloke Road, Bkk
2. Chinese SDA Church. 1325 Rama 4 Road, Bkk 10500
3. Ekamai Thai SDA Church. 57 Soi Charoenchai, Sukhumvit 63, Bkk
4. Ekamai International Church. 48 Soi Kasampanichakarn, Sukhumvit 71,
Klongtan, Klongtoey, Bkk 10110

OTHERS

1. Hope of Bangkok. 1200 Hope Place Rama 4 Rd., Klontoe, Bkk 1011
Pr. Pisanunat Sritawong 1981
- 1.1. Second Meeting Place. 222 Thansadkit Tower, Wipawadeerungsit Rd.,
Ladyao, Chatuchak, Bkk 10900

- 1.2. Third Meeting Place. Pata Huamark, Ramkhamhaeng, Bangkok, Bkk 10240
2. Immanuel Don Muang Church
3. Santisuk nai Phra Jesu Khrist Church
4. United Pentecostal Church. 163/16-19 Soi Yenjit Chan Road, Yannawa, Bkk 10120 1961
5. Church of Christ. 26 Soi Somprasong 4, Phetburi Road Bkk 10400

Sources:

Raigan prajam pee 1985 (EFT),
EFT Office 1987, Update
Christian Directory 1986-1987,
1987-1988, 1990-1991. Thailand
Christian Directory 1997. Smith
1982. Wells 1958, Blanford 1975.
Membership statistics of various
churches.

APPENDIX 3

MISSION AGENCIES ACTIVE IN THAILAND

1. AGENCIES AFFILIATED WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAILAND 1982

	Began	Visas
1. British Council of Churches		
2. Christian Aid		
3. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)		1903
4. Chinese Mission Overseas		
5. Christian Missionary Society of Australia		
6. Committee of Protestant Churches in Germany for Service Overseas		
7. Church of South India		1959
8. Christian Volunteer in Thailand		
9. Church World Service		
10. Dienste in Übersee, Germany		
11. Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland		
12. German Leprosy Relief Association		
13. Hebron Church, Hong Kong		
14. Interchurch Coordination Committee for Development Projects. Netherlands		
15. Korea International Mission, Presbyterian Church in Korea		1971
16. United Church of Christ in Japan		
17. Lutheran Church in America		
18. Marburger Mission, Germany		1953
19. Mennonite Central Committee		
20. Mission to Seaman		
21. New Zealand Joint Board for Mission Overseas		
22. National Council of Churches in USA. (World Service)		
23. Presbyterian Church of New Zealand		
24. Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship		
American Baptist Mission (1833-1893)		1952
Baptist Union of Sweden		1976
25. The Leprosy Mission		
26. United Bible Societies		1889
27. Uniting Church in Australia		
28. United Church of Christ		
29. United Presbyter. Church in the USA. Volunteer in Mission		1840
30. World Council of Churches		

2. THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN THAILAND 1988

2.1. Conciliar Evangelical

Lutheran

1. Lutheran Mission in Thailand. A joint mission of the Norwegian Missionary Society, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong and the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand est. in 1994 1976 28*

Presbyterian

1. Korea Presbyterian Mission. Korean Presbyterian General Assembly. (Hapdong). Had missionaries affiliated with the CCT from 1956 to mid 1970s. Registered with the EFT 1980. Most of the visas in loan to other missions, including Korea Global Village Mission. 1956 20

2.2. Evangelical, Fundamentalist or Baptist

Denominational

1. Christian and Missionary Alliance. Established 1887 in The USA. Part of the Holiness movement, splinter from Methodists and others. Work in the Northeast, after Second World War also in Bangkok. In co-operation with the Gospel Church of Thailand. Founding member of the EFT and the Bangkok Bible College. 1929 46
2. American Churches of Christ Mission to Thailand. Tribal work in Northern Thailand. 1949 5
3. Philippines Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. Establ. in the Philippines 1957. Engaged in church-planting and social work. Half of the visas on loan to other missions. 1964 12*
4. The Evangelical Covenant Church of America – Thailand Mission. Established in USA around 1900. Co-operation with the CCT 1971-1977. Independent work 1977-. 1971 6

Non-denominational

1. Worldwide Evangelization Crusade. Evangelism church-planting and training Christians in Northern Thailand. 1947 34*
2. Far East Broadcasting Company. Established 1945 in the USA. Radio and TV- broadcasting, Bible correspondence courses. Mostly Thai staff. 1950 2
2. Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Est. in Great Britain, former China Inland Mission. Founder Hudson Taylor. Uses the Statement of Faith of the EFT as the Confessional basis in Thailand. Missionaries coming from several countries, also from Asia. Founding member of the EFT and the Bangkok Bible College. 1951 229

4. New Tribes Mission. Organized in 1942 in USA. A non-denominational sending agency of fundamentalist tradition seeking to evangelize and establish churches among unreached tribal people. North- Americans overseas 1 385.	1951	47
5. Thailand Child Evangelism Fellowship. Est. in 1933 the USA. Evangelism among children. Training of church workers in work among children.	1957	5
6. Christian Literature Crusade. Established 1941 in Great Britain. Prasert Bookstores in Bangkok and Haad Yai.	1958	3*
7. Japan Christian Mission in Thailand. Establ. in 1950. Evangelism, church-planting and social work in Central Thailand.	1969	21
8. South East Asia Christian Services. Est. in 1966 in Illinois, USA. Tribal work in Northern Thailand.	1970	15
9. Thailand Every Home Crusade. Est. in USA. Work in 52 countries. EFT Statement of Faith. Distrib. tracts to every home. No res. foreign staff.	1971	-
10. Living Bible International. Transl. and distributing the paraphrased Bible. Est. in USA. In co-operation with Thailand Every Home Crusade. No resident foreign staff.	1972	-
11. The Asian Christian Mission. Est. in 1972 in Missouri, USA. Evangelism, health care and educational work among tribal people, Thais and Chinese in Northern Thailand.	1972	20
12. Campus Crusade for Christ. Est. in California, USA in 1950. Evangelistic work especially among university students.	1972	6
13. North Thailand Christian Mission. Independent mission of the Morse Family (USA). Work among Lisu people in China, Burma and Thailand since 1921. Registered in Thailand in 1973.	1973	16
14. Youth with a Mission. Established 1960 in USA. EFT Statement of Faith. Evangelism and relief work, refugee work. Also temporary relief and refugee workers.	1973	11
15. World Vision. Est. in 1950 in the USA. Relief and social development work. Literature publishing and research work.	1974	3
16. Christ to Thailand Mission. Established in 1977 in the Philippines. Bible and literature distribution (World Home Bible League - Thailand), evangelism and church work. Training Center in Khon Kaen, Northeast Thailand.	1976	14
17. China Evangelistic Mission. Established 1974 in Hong Kong Evangelism church-planting, Bible training and socialwork among Chinese (refugees of the Kuomintang) in Northern Thailand. Self-supporting local churches transferred to 12th District of the CCT.	1976	3
18. World Evangel-Aid Inc. Est. in Oklahoma, USA. Supporting national evangelists. Director an independent missionary from Japan.	1977	3

19. World Concern. Est. in 1962 in USA. Social development and relief work	1979	2
20. World Missions Evangelism of Thailand. Supported by the World Missions Texas USA. Educational and social development programs among youth. Board of Directors comprised of Thai Christians.	1979	-
21. AMG International. (Advancing the ministries of the Gospel) Est. in 1942 in New York, USA. Until 1974 American Mission to Greeks A non-denominational sending agency of evangelical and baptist tradition. Evangelism, childcare, radio and TV broadcasting, support of nationals and literature production. North-Americans overseas 46.	1980	4
22. The Asian Gospel Mission in Thailand. Established in Korea, Taiwan and Japan. Evangelism, literature work and supporting pastors, evangelists and Bible students. Hopes to assist in sending Thai missionaries to other countries.	1980	1
23. International Christian Aid. Relief and social development work.	1980	-
24. The Great Commission. Est. in 1975 in USA. EFT Statement of Faith as the confessional statement. Evangelism and Bible training among Mhong people in Northern Thailand.	1980	5
25. Faith Bible Mission. Est. in 1972 in USA. Evangelism, church-planting Bible training in Bangkok and Northern Thailand Connections to Methodists in the USA.	1980	5
26. Streams of Blessing. Thai director.	1981	-
27. Frontier Labourers for Christ. Office in Chiang Mai	1981	NA
28. Gospel for Northern Tribal People Organization. Office in Chiang Mai. Thai director.	1981	NA
29. Southeast Asian Outreach. American, Office in Bangkok.	1984	NA
30. World Missions Thailand (World Mission for Jesus). In co-operation with World Missions, Canada. Social work in Bangkok.	1984	-
31. Korea Global (Village) Mission. Interdenominational. Evangelism and church-planting. Establishing a theological seminary. Uses the visas of the Korea Presbyterian Mission and Korea International Mission (3 visas).	1987	

2.3. Restoration movements

1. Christian Brethren Missionary group. Origin in England and Northern Ireland in the beginning of 19th century. Known also by the name Plymouth Brethren. Missionaries in residence 1882-1929. Re-entered Thailand 1953. Work among Chinese. Exclusive.	1953	13
2. South East Asian Mission, Church of God (Anderson). Established in 1880 in Anderson, Indiana, USA. In co-operation with the Church of God in Thailand.	1973	2

2.4. Pentecostal and Charismatic

1. Finnish Free Foreign Mission. The Pentecostal movement in Finland began in the 1910s. Emphasizes the independence of a local congregation. In co-operation with the Full Gospel Churches in Thailand.	1946	57
2. Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission. Mission organization of the Swedish and Norwegian Pentacostals.	1951	30
3. Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In co-operation with the Full Gospel Assemblies of Thailand.	1961	15
4. Assemblies of God Field Fellowship Thailand. From USA. In co-operation with the Thailand Assemblies of God.	1968	19
5. Charismatic Christian Mission. Established by American independent missionaries, earlier in Cambodia. Refugee work, evangelism.	1973	4
6. Thailand National Institute for Christ. Independent mission est. by the Klebel Family from USA. Evangelism, church work, Bible training, miracle healing crusades.	1976	7
7. Church of God of Prophecy. A denominational sending agency of Holiness and Pentecostal tradition. Evangelism, church planting, childcare.	1978	3
8. Way of Life. Radio, TV and literature ministry. In co-operation with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Jai Samarn Church. Mostly Thai staff.	1978	-
9. Church of God of World Missions. Established 1886 in the USA. Evangelism, church planting and Bible training.	1978	3
10. P.T.L. Club Thailand. American Pentecostal TV-program. In co-operation with Assemblies of God Field Fellowship.	1979	3
11. Assemblies of God Mission Association. (<i>Ongkarn Khao Prasert Samphan haeng Prateth Thai</i>)	1985	5

3. THE BAPTIST CHURCH FOUNDATION

Thailand Baptist Mission (Southern Baptists)	1949	49
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4. FOUNDATION OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS OF THAILAND

Seventh Day Adventist Church of Thailand

1906 20

*1987

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APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE 1987 AND 1999

1. Name of the church
2. Person answering the survey
Pastor of the church/ Elder or member of the church committee/
Member of church
3. Which languages are used in your church?
Thai/ Chinese. Which Chinese languages?/ Thai and Chinese/ Other languages. Which?
4. Does your church have a written statement of faith?
No/ Yes. Please, enclose a copy of the statement or use a separate sheet.
5. Does your church confess
The Apostles' Creed/ The Nicene Creed/ The Athanasian Creed/None of the above mentioned
6. Where have studied Bible and theology?
7. Please, mention books which, in addition to the Bible, have influenced your theological thinking
8. Please, mention persons whom you have respected as your teachers and/or spiritual fathers
Name and Church affiliation
9. If you are an ordained pastor, where and by whom have you been ordained?
Name and position of the officiating minister. Country, church
10. Is your church a member of some Christian organisations? Which?
11. Is your church co-operating with other churches and Christian organizations? Which?
12. What kind of premises is your church using?
The church or the foundation owns the building/ The premises being paid by instalment plan/
Using rented premises/
Renting the meeting place only for the time of meetings/
Using only homes of the members
13. What is the plan of your church for evangelism in Bangkok?
To increase the membership of the church in Bangkok/ To establish daughter churches
14. Does your church have daughter churches?
No/ Yes. How many? Please give the names and the locations of the daughter churches
15. How is the relationship between the mother church and the daughter churches organized?
Daughter churches totally independent from the beginning/
Daughter churches for the time being under the control of the mother church, but will be totally independent later (can f.ex decide on joining other Christian organisations according to their wishes/ The mother church and the daughter church will be closely co-operating in the future/
Other arrangements. Please specify
16. In case your church is not yet totally self-supporting, from which churches (countries) and organisations are you receiving support?
17. Does your church keep a register on its members?

No/Yes

18.How many registered members were there at the end of 1986 in your church?

19.How many persons did your church baptize in 1986?

20.How many of the present members have been members of another church before?

21.Does your church accept the baptism given by other churches?

No/ Only those coming from churches with similar teaching about the baptism/ Yes

22.Does your church have a studyprogram for prebaptismal instruction?

No/ Yes. Please enclose a copy

23.How long is the time used for pre-baptismal instruction?

Baptism given immediately after conversion/ Less than three months/ More than three months, but less than one year

24.Which mode of baptism is used in your church?

Only immersion/ Only applying or sprinkling/Either by immersion or by applying or sprinkling

25.Does your church baptize the children of the members?

Yes/ No, not until they are _____ years old and ask themselves to be baptized

26.Who has the right to administer the baptism in your church?

27.How often does your church celebrate the Holy Communion?

Every week/ Usually twice a month/ Once a month/ Once a year

Not every year

28.Who has the right to administer the Holy Communion in your church?

29.Which Thai term is used about the Holy Communion in your church?

30.How is regular Bible teaching for members organized in your church?

31.Has your church prepared any material for Bible teaching?

No/ Yes. Please enclose copies

32.What other material is used in Bible teaching?

33.Has your church been formally organized?

Not yet/ Yes, since year _____/ No, formal organisation is not needed

34.Does your church have a regular General meeting?

No/ Yes, convening _____ times a year

35.Does your church have a pastor?

Yes/Not now, the position is temporarily vacant/ No, all Christians are brothers and sisters, therefore the church does not need appointed pastors

36.How is the governing body of the church called? (both in Thai and in English)

37.Who elected or appointed the first governing body

38.How are the members of that body elected or appointed now?

39. How long is their term of service?

40. How are the pastor and the governing body related to each other?

Pastor not a member of the governing body but has authority over it/ Pastor is the chairman of the governing body/ Pastor is a member of the governing body?/ Pastor is under supervision of the governing body

41. Who makes the final decision concerning the goals or the important matters of the church?

The General meeting/ The governing body/ The pastor

42. Is your church planning to continue as an independent church?

Yes/ No. If not what are your plans?

43. Do you know any other independent churches which are not members of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand? Please give the names and addresses

44. How and when was your church started? Who started the work? Please, give the important points in the history of your church. In case you have a written presentation on history of your church, please enclose a copy. If possible, enclose the constitution of your church.

45. What does your church teach about the meaning of the baptism?

46. What are the criteria in accepting the baptisms given by other churches?

47. What are the reasons for choosing the mode of baptism your church is using? (See question 24)

48. What does your church teach about the Holy Communion?

49. What does the ordination mean according to the teaching of your church? What rights and responsibilities does it give?

50. What is the statement of faith (confession) of your church? (In case it is not enclosed, see question 4) If you have any other material (books etc) on the teachings of your church, please enclose list of the material or copies of them.

In case it is not possible to find answers to following questions in the material you have given me, please answer the following questions:

51. How does a person become Christian?

52. What does your church teach about justification?

53. What does your church teach about sanctification?

54. What does your church teach about the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

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Khrisbak Issara is a Thai term for independent churches. These churches have been born on the initiative of Thai Christians, but connections to Evangelical, often Pentecostal churches, mission agencies and missionaries can be observed. The independent churches in Thailand are a part of a global phenomenon: the emergence of new movements and churches born outside the historical Protestant Churches.

This study deals with the history and the theological thinking of the independent churches in Thailand. The first independent churches were established in the late 1940s, but their emergence was connected to a revival in 1938-1939 and the experiences during the Second World War. Later independent churches are connected to the developments in the Protestant community since the 1970s.

Theologically, the independent churches in Thailand have been interested in ecclesiology and related topics. Some of the independent churches follow a congregational policy; some have developed new structures aimed for expansion and growth.