I’m delighted to be able to share a few words in this second 2010 issue of the “Shining Light in Thailand” newsletter. I look back over the past 29 years since the Holy Spirit converted me and I accepted the truth that Christ suffered and that his death on the cross was all for my sins. I realize now that God had plans for me beyond what I could ever imagine. Step by step He led me into three experiences; first, my mouth has not been kept from sharing God’s word since I became a Christian; second, through “Friends of Thailand Scholarship” He sent me to study theology for six years; and third, I have gone through major life and death experiences twice. I have survived a severe bus accident and God also spared my life during the 2004 tsunami in Southern Thailand. When many were killed in the tsunami, I was safely floating on the sea with my two little daughters just a few hundred meters away. A funeral service for a pastor and his two daughters could have taken place if we had remained just five minutes longer on Phi Phi Island.

When I read Isaiah 49:1-3 then I come to acknowledge the call of God and his mysterious ways to prepare a shy village boy to become His servant for the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Thailand. I believe that each one of us is not a member of this Remnant Church by accident but by the call, the call to a very special mission. It is a mission to share God’s love with our friends and neighbors. My heart is thrilled to see many new doors of opportunity open here in Thailand. Thai people are still looking for something to fill their emptiness which could not be found from a religion that is based on merely a sound philosophy.

Week after week since February this year, evangelistic meetings have been conducted by our American friends including Pastor Darry and Mrs. Ginny Campbell, Pastor Ralph and Mrs. Delores Rhyne, Pastor Mervin and Mrs. Elta Krause, Pastor Lowell and Mrs. Sandra Hargreaves with their children, Mike and Teresa. Through these different series of meetings 34 souls were baptized and added to the global family called the “Seventh-day Adventist Church”. The total number of souls baptized from January to April 2010 is 141. There are more major evangelistic meetings to be presented by the mother churches in Bangkok during the year 2010 with most speakers being from amongst our leaders at the General Conference, Southern Asia-Pacific Division and the Southeast Asia Union Mission.

Please keep praying for the work in Thailand and continue to support our ministry while we still have freedom to spread God’s word and the doors of opportunity are still open in every corner of this country.

--Nipitpon Pongteekatasana
Chiangmai Adventist Academy (CAA) was started during the year 1973 by Doctor John Dybdal and Pastor Chalaw Artamapadung. That’s almost 40 years ago now. It started with a small group of students and has grown to a present enrolment of approximately 700 students. We would like to thank current administrator Mr David Bell for his good leadership over the past 10 years. Several buildings and many improvements have taken place including new boys’ and girls’ dormitories, a church and new classroom buildings for both the high and primary schools. The most recent addition is the gym/auditorium which was completed at the end of March. CAA is looking forward to being able to make good use of the gym/auditorium this new school year.

CAMP MEETINGS 2010

The months of March and April are the months of camp meetings here in Thailand because these two months are school breaks. The following camps were held:

The Hmong Family Camp meeting was held from March 26 to 30. Hmong families throughout Thailand gathered together at the Muangphan Government High School compound in Lampang Province, Northern Thailand. There were over 300 attendees who came to this camp meeting. Pastor and Mrs Marvin Krause and Doctor and Mrs Lowell Hargreaves from the United States were the main speakers. All the Hmong pastors joined together with the members.

The Hmong Youth Camp was held from April 1 to 4 at the same location as the Family Camp. Over 150 young people came together. They were blessed with inspiring messages from Pastor and Mrs Marvin Krause and Doctor and Mrs Lowell Hargreaves. Thailand Adventist Mission president, Pastor Chanchai Kiatyanyong, and executive secretary, Pastor Nipitpon Pongteekatasana, together with all the Hmong pastors attended this camp meeting.

The Karen Youth Camp was held from March 31 to April 3. Over 300 Karen young people came together in Kanechue International Children’s Care Dormitory in Melamart District, Tak Province, near the Myanmar border. These young people were blest by the presence of Pastor and Mrs Marvin Krause. Thailand Adventist Mission president, Pastor Chanchai Kiatyanyong, executive secretary, Pastor Nipitpon Pongteekatasana, and all the Karen pastors also joined this camp meeting.

The Lahu Youth Camp was held from March 29 to 31. In the past the Lahu group used to have a combined camp for adults, children and young people in the Chiangrai Province, but this year just 45 young people came together. All the Lahu pastors and Pastor and Mrs Marvin Krause were the main speakers for this camp.

And finally the Northeast Youth Camp was held from April 4 to 7 at the Surin Boy Scouts’ Camp, Surin Province. There were over 200 young people present. This camp was organized by Northeast Zone pastors with Brother Christopher Sorensen, Adventist Frontier Mission worker in Thailand and Mr Danai Agartsupa, Thailand Mission Education Department Director joining the meeting.
FIRST GROUP GRADUATES FROM THAILAND MISSION LAY TRAINING PROGRAM

Two years ago, through the leadership and planning of Pastor Somchai Chuenjit, the then Thailand Mission President, and Pastor Chanchai Kiatyanyong, former Thailand Mission Secretary, now Thailand Mission President, 44 lay members registered for the Mission Lay Training Program. Out of the original number, 24 graduated from the lay training classes on March 15, 2010.

We would like to thank the following people, including Thailand Mission department heads who led in the training: Pastor Somchai Chuenjit, presently Bangkok Adventist Hospital President; Pastor Chanchai Kiatyanyong, Thailand Mission President, Doctor Surachet Insom, Thailand Mission Adventist World Radio, Health and Spirit of Prophecy Director; Mr. Danai Agartsupa, Thailand Mission Education Director; Doctor Boonrat Moolkeo, Thailand Mission Sabbath School/Personal Ministry/Stewardship Director, Pastor Nipitpon Pongteekatasana, Thailand Mission Executive Secretary, and other department leaders.

During the graduation ceremony, the Thailand Mission Ministerial Secretary, Pastor Rungsit Satayavaksakool, gave the challenge to everyone to carry out their work for the people of Thailand.

The second group will graduate in 20 months from now.

THAILAND ADVENTIST MISSION ANNUAL WORKERS’ MEETINGS

Once a year Thailand Adventist Mission holds meetings for all their workers and spouses. This year the meetings were held from March 21 to 23 with over 200 workers and spouses present. The devotional speakers were Pastor Kevin Costello, Southern Asia-Pacific Division Associate Treasurer/IDE Specialist and Pastor Simon Siew, Southeast Asia Union Mission Youth Director.

At the same time, the ladies (Shepherdesses) led by Thailand Mission Shepherdess Coordinator, Mrs Julie Griswold, held separate meetings as partners of the pastors in their ministry. The children were blessed by the ministry of Mrs Lisa Quade, from the USA Feeding the Lambs Ministry, assisted by Mrs Bobbie Jo and a group of ladies who supervised activities for the children.

The climax of the meeting was the challenge given by Pastor Chanchai Kiatyanyong, Thailand Adventist Mission President. Everyone went home with renewed vigor and enthusiasm to continue serving the Lord in their respective areas.

NORTHEAST PASTORS AND ELDERS TRAINING

The Thailand Mission Ministerial Association in cooperation with the Southeast Asia Union Mission Ministerial Association organized elders and pastors training in Ubon, Northeast Thailand from February 7 to 9 for pastors and from February 10 to 11 for elders. Pastor Saw Samuel, Southeast Asia Union Mission Ministerial Secretary and Pastor Rungsit Satayavaksakool, Thailand Adventist Mission Ministerial Secretary were the main speakers for this special training.

Topics for pastors were the following: Keys to Success in Ministry, Visitation, Nurturing, Preparing for Evangelistic Meetings, Church Revival, How to Present an Appeal and Pastoral Ethics.

Elders discussed the following topics: Elders Qualifications, Duties, Visitation, Bible Study, Preaching Techniques/Styles and participated in practical training activities such as the communion service, funeral service, child dedication, and other services of the church for elders.

There were over 50 pastors and elders who joined these meetings.

CENTRAL/SOUTH PASTORS TRAINING

The Ministerial Association of Thailand Mission organized the Central/South pastors training on February 15 and 16. There were over 30 pastors who attended.

Pastor Saw Samuel, the Southeast Asia Union Mission Ministerial Secretary was the main speaker. Topics included: Keys to Success in Ministry, Visitation, Nurturing, Preparing for Evangelistic Meetings, Church Revival, How to Present an Appeal and Pastoral Ethics.

Hope for Bangkok personnel also joined this training. Pastor Nipitpon Pongteekatasana, Thailand Mission Executive Secretary, spoke on How to Prepare Evangelistic Meetings—mainly for the Central Pastors and Hope for Bangkok personnel in preparation for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division evangelistic reaping meetings in different areas of Bangkok.
In 1985 the first ATI project from Saniku College, Japan Union Conference, through the leadership at the time of Pastor Akinori Kaibe, Japan Union Youth Director, Doctor Shibuta, Far Eastern Division Education Director, Pastor Fujita, ADRA Japan Director, Pastor Chris Ishii, Fresno Asian Church Pastor, Pastor Masayuki Hirota, the first ATI president, came to Doisang, Chiangmai, Northern Thailand, to build a church. Twenty-five years have passed and many members have been added to the church and so now it is too small. From March 4 to 20, 2010, the ATI came back to Doisang to pull down the building and build a new bigger church. This time it was through the leadership of Pastor Koken Kondo, Saniku College Chaplain, and a team of 30 people from Japan who came to Doisang to build the church.

Also over the past 25 years the Japanese group has built 23 churches altogether in Thailand. This is the 25th year of the project so we have celebrated this important anniversary. Thailand Adventist Mission has given plaques of appreciation to the Japan Union Conference, Saniku College and the ATI Club. Members from many other churches built by ATI groups came and joined to give thanks and gifts to the ATI members.

THAILAND ADVENTIST MISSION HANDICRAFT CENTER

If you read the Shining Light two years ago, you would have learned that the Thailand Adventist Mission started a Handicraft Center in Chiangmai Church, Northern Thailand. Now we have over 50 different designs of ladies’/men’s bags for sale.

If any of you are interested to buy the handicraft products as gifts for your friends, relatives, and loved ones you may purchase these Adventist Thai brand products. You can place your orders as follows:

Email: sdatam@loxinfo.co.th
Phone: 662 391 3595; 66 89 185 4432; 66 84 450 1642 (Mrs. Saowaluk, Thailand Mission Cashier or Rungsit Satayavaksakool). Check our website and products at www.adventist.or.th

As some of you may recall the Chinese SDA Church in Bangkok started 70 years ago and had to move from place to place until about 50 years ago when they rented the Chulalongkorn property for their church building. For the past 10 years the Church has had difficulties with the Chulalongkorn University management. They wanted to take the property back for their own use, so they raised the rent—double, triple and now ten times more. The Chinese SDA Church is currently renting the property for Bht 1,800,000 per year. The church members discussed the possibility of buying their own property and building a new church instead of renting from the university.

Finally, the Chinese Church Board found a piece of land costing Bht 20,000,000 and the church board voted to buy this property. The church building will cost approximately Bht 15,000,000 – Bht 18,000,000. This means that the Chinese Church members and Thailand Adventist Mission need to fundraise Bht 35,000,000 – Bht 38,000,000 to purchase the land and build a church. Please remember this big burden in your prayers.

MOSQUITO NETS AND BLANKETS DISTRIBUTION IN LAOS, PDR

From January 27 to February 3, 2010, Mr Udom Srikureja, Mrs Rajpal Srikureja, owners of Ramkhamhaeng International School, and Pastor Rungsit Satayavaksakool, Laos Project Director, brought and distributed 1,400 mosquito nets, 1,400 blankets and 4,200 notebooks and pens to the Xiangkwang Boarding School, Xiangkwang Province and the Udomxai Boarding School, Udomxai Province through the leadership of Mr Lytou Buapoao, Minister of Education, Laos, PDR. With this distribution, the two governors and the minister of education gave certificates of appreciation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Thailand and Ramkhamhaeng International School.

The next distribution trip is planned for November 1 to 7, 2010 in Luangprabang and Sayaburi Provinces. On this trip we plan to give to a greater number of students. The budget is about Bht 500,000 or US$15,000.

Please pray for this distribution. Thailand Adventist Mission has good relationship with the Laos, PDR Government. We hope in the future this will be a benefit for our churches in Laos, PDR.