Shining Light in Thailand

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Warm greetings to our beloved readers of the Shining Light in Thailand once again and thank you for your continued support and contributions toward our Lord’s work in Thailand.

We praise God that our Triennial Session and Workers’ Meetings between 28 and 31 March 2011 came to a successful conclusion with a motion of agreement from our members and pastors to adopt the 777 Worldwide Holy Spirit Prayer Fellowship initiative of the General Conference. Seventh-day Adventist believers around the globe, praying 7 days a week at 7 pm or 7 am for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit’s power and presence to bring revival and reformation.

If the message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people, then we need to follow Mrs. White’s wise counsel in -R & H, Dec. 15, 1904, which states “God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children. A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit…” 1 Selected Messages, Page 128

If there is a time in human history that we as Seventh-day Adventists must warn the world of its soon ending it is now, as we wait for an end to sin and suffering as Jesus said in Matthew 24: 6-8 “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famine, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

In March this year I received a copy of an email from one of our Japanese pastors written from the core of his being, saying “By this East Japan giant earthquake/tsunami, many people are dead. How will God watch this tragic incident? God is love. Will not God participate in this earthquake/tsunami? God surely exists and lives. However, I think that God is totally indifferent to this tragic incident. I now have a doubt whether God is really love.”


The many advances in human knowledge in science and technology have proved unsuccessful and helpless to prevent or stop these natural disasters from happening. How can human suffering end while sin is still ruling and controlling this world? As a faithful follower of Jesus Christ we cannot do anything more than to pray for those who are suffering and comfort each other with His promise “He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” Revelation 22:20. I believe this will happen very soon.

This year Thailand Adventist Mission, together with the Buddhist Study Center entered two new previously unentered territories in Angthong and Suphanburi, central provinces of Thailand, which are strongly dominated by Buddhism. We extended the Hope for Bangkok Project for another five years and there are three major church planting programs being implemented in this big city. There is the need to increase the number of pastors and gospel workers in Thailand, more radio stations will be built and satellite TV programming is proving its effectiveness through a team of committed laymen.
I would like to ask you to keep this new work and the challenges it presents in your prayers and lend your support so that we can share our joy together when our Lord comes and says “Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing”

--Nipitpon Pongteekatasana

**TAM HOLDS TRIENNIAL SESSION**

On March 28 and 29, 2011 Thailand Adventist Mission held its Triennial Session. There were over 200 delegates from throughout the country in attendance. Pastor Chanchai Kiatanyong, Thailand Mission President led out, with the devotional and opening session taken by Pastor Joshua Mok, President, Southeast Asia Union Mission. During the session the nominating committee appointed the departmental leaders, the chairs of the SDA Foundation and SDA Association including, Chiangmai Adventist Education and Chinese Church Foundations and also the institutions’ committees and boards including Thailand Mission Executive Committee members.

**AGENCY/SERVICES**

ADRA....................................................................................................... Brendon Irvine
Philanthropy.............................................................................................. Anucha Saeyong
VOP/Asso. Children’s Ministries/
SDA Language School Administrator (Bangkok-Ubon).......................... Saipin Insom
Global Mission......................................................................................... Chanchai Kiatanyong
Adventist Laymen Services and Industries (ASI)................................. Songrit Detwinya
AMiCUS................................................................................................... Wirachai Annekunawut
Leadership Education and Development (LEAD).............................. Nipitpon Pongteekatasana
Shepherdess International........................................................................ Julie Griswold
Spirit of Prophecy (SOP).......................................................................... Surachet Insom
Adventist World Radio (AWR/TAM Radio Ministry)............................. Surachet Insom

**OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ministerial/Adventist Chaplaincy/GO/ASAP Coordinator....................... Songrit Detwinya
Education /Pathfinder/Prison Ministry................................................. Danai Agartsupa
SS/PM /Stewardship/Trust Services/Philanthropy.............................. Anucha Saeyong
Public Affairs/Religious Liberty
Communication/Community Service................................................ Khongrit Imkamol
Children’s/Family/Women’s Ministries.............................................. Hanna Detwinya
Health/AWR/TAM Radio/Translation/SOP......................................... Surachet Insom
Youth/Amicus/Ekamai Thai Church Pastor......................................... Wirachai Annekunawut
Hope For Bangkok/E-Tithe Coordinator.......................................... Douglas Venn
Publishing Ministry............................................................................ Demetrio Taotao
Below are the new faces to serve for 2011-2015 in the various departments:

Songrit Detwinya – graduated with a Master’s Degree in Ministry from AIIAS. Recently he served as the Bangkok Chinese Church pastor and prior to that was Vice President for Student Affairs at Mission College.

Anucha Saeyong – a former departmental leader but was appointed as Haadyai church pastor about eight years ago. We welcome him back as a departmental leader.

Khongkrit Imkamon – graduated from Theology at Mission College and served there for a few years. He was then appointed to open new work in the Samutsongkram Province and later on joined the Hope for Bangkok program with sole charge of the church plant in the Sukhumvit area.

Wirachai Annekunawut – graduated from Mission College and served as Associate Church Pastor for Mission College for many years. About three years ago Thailand Adventist Mission called him to serve as Ekamai SDA Thai Church Pastor in Bangkok. This time the nominating committee appointed him to serve as the youth director.

LAOS TRIP

From March 23 to 25, 2011 Pastor Rungsit Satayavaksakool went to Vientiane to meet with the Minister of Education to plan for the next three years in Laos to assist their schools and students. During the meeting, the Director of General Education gave a letter of thanks and appreciation including several awards from the principals of schools in Udomxai, Sanyaburi, Luangbrapang, and Attaphue provinces as their appreciation for the work done and the assistance given to the boarding schools in Laos.

At the same time Pastor Rungsit met with the Laos Mission Officers and planned the assistance to the church and to our members in Laos. The following are the projects to receive assistance for the years 2011 and 2012:

1. Finish Namyuen Church. This church was built by Pastor Wirachai some 40 years ago. After the communist regime took over we struggled with this church. However God protected and performed many miracles. But because it was built 40 years ago the church membership has grown. The church members have raised funds for the foundation and roof, but are not able to finish the walls and the floor including windows, doors and furniture. The Laos Mission has requested that we raise funds of up to US$3,500.00 to finish this church.

2. Namphet Church building. There is a big group of SDA believers here but so far no church as yet. The church members have raised funds by themselves and have finished the roof and the floor, but they need US$2,000 to finish the walls, windows, doors and benches.

3. Water Supply for church members in Sarawang province. Work in the Chanpasuk and Sarawang provinces was opened by Mun Lansri and Rungsit Satayavaksakool some 15 years ago. Now the SDA believers have spread to many villages but they do not have water. Our church members and the government have combined to request help from the Laos Project to install pipes and bring water from the mountain. The total cost is about US$7,000.

4. Mosquito nets and blankets for the SDA members. Two months ago we distributed mosquito nets and blankets to our church members in Northern and Southern Laos. Now in Vientiane province and capital and Borikhamxai province we have 220 SDA families and most of them are poor. They need mosquito nets and blankets with a total cost of US$2,500 to buy 250 sets of mosquito nets and blankets.

5. Mosquito nets and blankets for poor students. The Laos Minister of Education has requested 2,000 mosquito nets, 2,000 blankets, 2,000 notebooks, sandals, pens and other supplies for schools. Total cost is Bht 564,000 or US$18,800.

If any of you could help in any of these projects or part of the project please send you contribution to:
Seventh-day Adventist Church of Thailand
Krungthai Bank –Sukhumvit 71 Branch
Account Number: 077-1-31824-3
LITERATURE EVANGELISTS ACCOMPANIED BY ANGELS

Lampang is the third largest town in Northern Thailand and it is the capital of Lampang Province and district. Located in the heart of the north, it was almost sunset on January 12, 2011 when I arrived in Lampang. It is approximately 600 kilometers from Bangkok. Upon my arrival one of the literature evangelists came up to me and with a discouraged tone of voice said; “Sir, for one week we have only sold three books”.

As a leader who understood her feelings, I immediately called the other literature evangelists to come closer to the book display and with bowed heads said a short prayer for God’s presence and blessing as we work together. After we prayed, I could see in their eyes that they were invigorated. Then we started distributing a lot of free literature and before 8:00 pm, we were able to get some orders.

In the morning, I woke them up for morning worship. During our Bible reading, I asked them if they had some doubts and fears while working in that province. I still remember that they mentioned some personal problems but generally in my observation, I could sense that they worked hard but they lacked one thing. Maybe, they forgot that in working for perishing souls that they are not alone. I started sharing the Ministry of Holy Angels with them. I told them what the Spirit of Prophecy tells us if we work for Him. It says; “We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels. It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the cooperation of heavenly beings.” The Acts of the Apostles, p. 154. (1911) {CM 110.1} I told them that when you go canvassing you should remember that you are not alone. You have the cooperation of heavenly beings.

Right after our worship, we started preparing ourselves for field work and for two days we saw how the Lord will work for us if we trust in Him. God gave us the most encouraging event on the third day when we were heading back to Bangkok with three literature evangelists. We stopped by a restaurant during lunch time. The restaurant has a main building but had a number of huts around (a simple roofed shelter with one or two sides left open). Someone suggested that we choose one hut about 15 meters away from the main building for the four of us.

After the waiter came to our table to ask for our order, he gave us five glasses of water first even though there were only four of us. One literature evangelist commented and said, “Sir, why did the waiter give us five glasses of water”? I said, “never mind”. After a few minutes the same waiter came back to us with a heavy wooden chair and he purposely placed it beside me.

The same literature evangelist was impressed to believe that there must be someone who was with us that we could not see. So I took a picture with the five glasses and the additional chair that was placed beside me. And the literature evangelist said, “Sir, this morning you told us several stories about angels who will accompany the LEs and now God has confirmed it”. But I told her to wait. In my mind, I thought, if the same waiter delivers our food and brings five plates of rice instead of four, then we can be sure that there must be an angel who was really with us. And sure enough when the waiter delivered the food, he brought five plates with rice on each plate and he even gave us one extra plate without rice.

After our lunch there we drove back to Bangkok with gladness in our hearts. We sang a number of songs on the way celebrating God’s goodness because, despite the many obstacles that Thai literature evangelists have encountered, at last they have experienced the joy of heaven and the reality of God’s promises that those who work for Him faithfully can be certain to have the companionship of angels.

The following quotations always inspire me when I’m called to face challenges with the literature evangelists. In working for perishing souls you have the companionship of angels. Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are waiting to co-operate with members of our churches in communicating the light that God has generously given, that a people may be prepared for the coming of Christ.—Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 129. (1909) {CM 110.2} They Are Ever Near --Those who labor for the good of others are working in union with the heavenly angels. They have their constant companionship, their unceasing ministry. Angels of light and power are ever near to protect, to comfort, to heal, to instruct, to inspire. -- Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 307, 308. (1900) {CM 110.3}

--Demetrio Taotao
OPENING NEW CHURCHES

1. On January 1, Thailand Adventist Mission opened Ban Payaphipat Church, Chiangrai Province. This area in Northern Thailand was conquered by the communists 15 years ago. Now the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only denomination that has decided to enter this area to reach out to the community. A retired pastor from Korea donated funds for church construction. New work was opened in this area four years ago and now a new church has been established. Many young people are coming to church and many of them are attending our boarding school (Chiangmai Adventist Academy) and they are a strong support to our work. Some young people are now studying at Asia Pacific International University (formerly Mission College). Our pastor is working closely with the local government leaders.

There are many interests with new families studying the Bible and preparing for baptism. We pray that when this church grows and the members are strong in their faith, that they will then reach out to the surrounding community. We solicit your prayers for the growth of this new church.

2. On March 26, another church at Maesangnam in Maehongson Province was opened and dedicated as a worship place for the 25 adult members and 20 children. From a small bamboo church to a lovely, presentable concrete church which rises to give glory and honor to God. This also provides joy and inspiration to the church members.

Mr. Scott Hill, a layman from Rockwood Church, USA and his group raised funds and came to build the Maesangnam Church. They spent two weeks building this church. This is his fourth church in as many years that he has built in Thailand.

On behalf of Thailand Adventist Mission, we would like to say a big thank you for Brother Scott’s commitment and dedication to build churches in the Thailand Adventist Mission territory. After the completion of this new church building, the church members were very happy and are determined to invite more people to come and join their group. Now there are many studying the Bible and preparing for baptism. Many young people are studying the Bible and coming to the church because they experienced the kindness of the Rockwood Church volunteers. Many young people have learned from the lives of this special group.

3. April 9 saw the opening of a new church at Nonghainoi, Amnatcharen Province. Previously there was a small wooden church here that had stood for many years. Thailand Mission appointed a layman to take care of this area.

Our faithful layman attended training which was organized by the Mission and after he finished the training, he was able to organize evangelistic meetings, go on visitation, organize teams and programs to reach out to his local community. He also organized health programs to reach out to the surrounding community. Through his efforts, and with the leading of the Holy Spirit, more people are coming to church, studying the Bible, and preparing for baptism.

Eventually, the small wooden church could not accommodate the growing numbers, so Thailand Mission approved the building of a concrete church. It is a good-looking building. The day of the dedication saw many local people witness the proceedings and watch the progress with many attending. Thailand Mission used the church building funds to build this church.

We sincerely thank our supporters who donated funds for church building for Thailand Adventist Mission.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work for the growth of this church and pray for their readiness for the coming of Jesus Christ.
Elders’ Training

We realize that the Adventist Church in Thailand will grow strong and firm if we have good training programs for our elders and leaders of the churches. Over 100 elders attended the training held in Bangkok at the Ekamai Thai Church from April 21 to 23, 2011.

We want to express our sincere thanks to the representatives from all levels of our church for their participation: Pastor Jonas Arrais from the General Conference, Pastor Houtman Sinaga, from Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and Pastor Simon Siew from Southeast Asia Union Mission. After the training we gathered feedback from the church members and discovered that our elders now understand their roles and have begun to assist our church pastors, enthusiastic in doing outreach and giving Bible studies.

Lay Training

We also realized that many of our church members are enthusiastic to work in their local churches. However, they do not have the knowledge or know how and where to start the work. When we opened a training program for our lay members who want to serve the Lord, 25 answered the challenge. They finished the training and completed all the requirements, went back to their churches and implemented what they have learned. Many invited people to come and visit their church on Sabbath. They now also lead out and organize the local church members to visit those who are interested. Through this movement the church is reviving in working for the Lord.

A second group of lay members are attending the next training session. Twelve members joined and accepted the challenge. During the training in Bangkok we took them to participate in the Health Expo in Bangkok to give them hands-on experience in the field and go back to their territories to start the work.

Thai Theology Training Course in Bangkok

We have 25 good and faithful church pastors and laymen who do not have a degree in Theology. The Thai Theology Program initiative started this quarter from March 14 to 25 led by the Asia Pacific International University. The next session will be from October 3 to 14, 2011. It will take five years for this group to complete the program and we hope to have 25 candidates completing their Bachelor’s Degree in Theology. We realize that many church pastors are retiring and we will need qualified workers so we can open new work in the cities throughout Thailand.

Thailand Mission needs funding for this program, so we would like to solicit your prayers and your financial support.
TAM ESTABLISHES SCHOOL IN UBON

The work of the church is slowly growing in the northeast part of Thailand. A number of years ago we had a very famous school in Ubon Province. Almost everybody in Ubon city knew the Mission School. Many alumni members in the school were successful because of the training they received from the Mission School. The Alumni members encouraged us to re-establish a Mission School for their children and the new generation.

Because of this encouragement Thailand Adventist Mission voted to establish a new school in Ubon, UBON ADVENTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION SCHOOL (UAIMS). We are now in the process on working through all the legal documents with the Education Ministry Department. We found that the response is very positive from the government side, from the people in Ubon City and from our church members. The opening date is August 15, 2011. The plan is for the school to cover years K to 12. The initial opening though will see classes for just K, 1 and 2 and we will continue to add year levels and move up each year till Grade 12. We also need your prayers for this school to be established so that the work of the Lord will spread out through the students who are attending this school.

PHUKET SCHOOL UPDATE

The construction of the school is almost complete. We plan to move the school from the hospital property to the new location with the church property on August 1, 2011.

Our school board just met and we still lack Bht 3,500,000 to complete the entrance gate, landscaping, a water system, and other essentials.

Thank you very much to all the donors for your contributions towards this project.
There are approximately 1.5 million people in Northern Thailand who are considered as ethnic minority “hill-tribe”. They traditionally live in the mountains of the region with the fertile lowlands. This ethnic minority hill tribe are the Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Akha, Lisu, Luwa, Palaung, Padaung, Tai Lue, Tai Dam and Mlabri. In order to access either technical / vocational training (vocational schools) after junior high school (completion of grade 9) or any form of tertiary education (college / university) after completion of high school (grade 12) these students would need to travel to live in either the larger district towns or the provincial capital cities. This is a drastic change of scene and culture for them and also places a significant financial strain on their parents and themselves. They cannot afford both the tuition fees and the cost of accommodation in the city or town.

In recognition of this difficulty, the Chiangmai Church Board in 2009 decided to construct a new boys’ dormitory at the Chiang Mai City SDA church property. This project aims to provide up to 40 hill-tribe youth access to affordable low-cost accommodation options within a strong supportive, mentoring and safe environment within Chiang Mai.

The current estimated cost for the construction of the dormitory building is Thai Baht 6,624,000 (about US$ 220,800, with a conversion rate of US$ 1 = 30 THB). The second floor of this new boys’ dormitory building will be used as the church guestrooms in order to earn some extra income to support several church activities.

The following have already committed some amount for this project: Thailand Adventist Mission Bht 500,000, Crocodile Foundation (Singapore) Bht 300,000, Robert and Julie Norris via ADRA Australia and Thailand Bht 40,000 towards the project. We are seeking support through fund raising for the remaining Bht 5,424,000 (US$ 180,800) We need more prayers, more blessings and more support for this project.

Please channel your donations to the following:

Name of Account: “SDA Church of Thailand Project Chiangmai SDA Church Boy’s Dormitory”
Name of Bank : Siam Commercial Bank, Thapae Branch AC/No: 501-408020-4

OR

Name of Account: SDA Church of Thailand
Name of Bank: Thai Farmers Bank, Sukhumvit 71 Branch
AC/No: 971-2-02160-5 specify as for Chiangmai SDA church Boy’s Dormitory project

Last February 5-6, 2011 Students from Chiangmai City Church Dormitory conducted a Christian Youth Concert in Maetor Karen Hilltribe Church. The young people distributed used clothes to villagers and cleaned up the garbage around the village area.

We would like to thank God for the 935 baptisms in 2010. The first quarter 2011 saw 149 precious souls baptized into Christ. We need your prayers for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit so our soul winning will bring more souls to the Kingdom of Heaven.