

Thai Tidbits

Verasak (Kim) & Rebecca Voraritskul
Khon Kaen, Thailand
<thaities@loxinfo.co.th>

Overseers: Silver Spring Church of Christ
100 East Franklin Ave., Silver Spring, MD
<office@silverspringcofc.org>

January 2017

Year 18, Issue 69

Talked to 2,000 Vocational Students



God opened a great opportunity for me to speak to 2,000 vocational students on December 26, 2016. The school had a Christmas celebration, and they wanted someone to

tell the story about Jesus and Christmas. I took the opportunity. It was the first time that many of the students heard that Jesus was born to die for our sins. At least the seed has been sown in their minds. May God open the hearts of some. As a result of this occasion, on January 20, 2017, I was invited to speak to another ninety English students and seven teachers about the importance of knowing English.

A Two Year English Bible School

I am making a survey to find out the Thai people's reception about starting a two-year English Bible school in Khon Kaen. The two-year Thai Bible school now is less popular among the Thai Christians since hundreds of them have already graduated from the school and became vocational preachers. We are not lacking preachers but we are lacking supporters both from individuals and Thai churches to support the graduates as full-time preachers. Therefore, to produce more preachers with no hope of filling the pulpits or of establishing new congregations makes the Thai Bible School less popular in the present situation.

However, to start a two-year English Bible school, the graduates may not be full-time preachers but the benefit of knowing and speaking English will benefit the students for their further education or career after they graduate from the Bible School. Instead of just teaching English, it would be good for our students to also know their Bible well. They can become strong leaders in the future who can search and self-study for further knowledge without depending on others as much. If they decide to become preachers, they will be better preachers who are able to do self-study since most Christian literature is in English.

The students will be required to study prep-English courses for at least six months before actually studying in the Bible school. The students will also be required to have a high school or college education before applying for admission.

Every year missionaries visit Thailand but to be able to start this school, I will need a few American preachers or elders who can sacrifice one month a year of their vacation to come help teach different Bible courses. If you know anyone or if you yourself are interested to doing this, please contact me and let me know your qualifications and the time that you can come teach. I will greatly appreciate knowing in advance.

I am planning to begin the English Bible school this August 2017 if things work out. These students will be of a different caliber than past students.

The Church Recognition

The church has been in Thailand since 1959 but has never been recognized by the Religious Department because they only recognize five groups—Catholic, Protestant, Seven-Day Adventist, Pentecostal, and the Baptist. Every time we apply to register, they tell us to join one of the five groups. Of course these groups do not want us to join them so we have been just one of the few other groups hanging in the air.

In the past, the only reason we wanted to be recognized was so that our missionaries could get a one-year visa to work in the country. Today such a need is not there anymore because we hardly have any missionaries in the country. Most of the work now is in the hand of Thai preachers, but visiting missionaries still come every year for a short term.

There are other benefits if the Church is recognized such as young preachers will be exempt from military service, a tax reduction for Church contribution, a discount on utilities, assistance from government when they have special benefits, and we will be a participant religious law-maker. I flew to Bangkok to meet with brothers Patinya and Prasit and expressed my concern that we do not create a human organization over the Divine institute—the Church.

We are gathering statistics of membership from various churches. We will have to come up with 5,000 names.

One of the biggest problems is that the government will deal with only the representative group and not with every church individually. We worry that this organization for the churches of Christ might become like the Missionary Society in America that has too much power and that they will begin controlling the churches with power they receive from the government. We are working to limit this central organization so that each local church will not lose her autonomy. There will be national conference in Bangkok on February 18 at Watcharapon Church to talk about this central organization as the representative for the churches of Christ in Thailand.