

that can meet all of the needs of the urban family. Their philosophy of ministry is to reach the "up-and-outer as well as the down-and-outer." The staff plans to use technology heavily. Houston is the wealthiest city in the nation. If this wealth could be channeled toward evangelism and church planting, there is no limit to what could be accomplished.

The five strategies discussed in this chapter are shared with a view to stimulating interaction and discussion. Many other models or classifications of models could be given. Through dialogue and unification of overseas missions and home missions, world-class cities can be more effectively evangelized.

12

Megachurches for Christian Minorities: Hope of Bangkok

Kriengsak Chareonwongsak

As the church of Jesus Christ develops strategies to reach the continent of Asia with the gospel, we cannot ignore the Buddhist bloc, which forms a major portion of the Asian population. Thailand is probably the most strategic country in Buddhist Asia. The World Fellowship of Buddhism and its president are found in Thailand, where 94 percent of the population confess Buddhism. Many believe that "to be a Thai means to be a Buddhist."

Protestant missionaries first entered Thailand in 1816, and by 1978, 162 years later, there were only 58,953 Thai Protestant Christians.¹ By 1988 the Protestant population probably stood at around 80,000 at the most,² an insignificant portion of the bulging population of 56 million. With its population of over 6 million people, over 1020 slums, and a population growth of over 750,000 per annum,³ Bangkok makes an ideal site in which to test and apply strategies for urban mission in a highly resistant area.

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1. David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 664.

2. This is a figure reported by Reverend Charan Ratanbutra, chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand in *Asia Christian* (March 1988), p. 8. A common problem in compiling figures from various missions is that one believer is counted by two (or more!) missions due to unreliable membership rolls. My own guess is that active church attendance of Protestants in Thailand in the late 1980s did not exceed 25,000.

3. Ray Bakke with Jim Hart, *The Urban Christian* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1987), 35.