

TOWARDS A CLEAN CHURCH

**A Case Study in Nineteenth-Century
Thai Church History**

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Church of Christ in Thailand**

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TO THE CHURCH

The Church History

Table of Contents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	V	
INTRODUCTION	1	
CHAPTER 1	Founding of the Station to 1888	5
CHAPTER 2	Siam Mission Reform Party	13
CHAPTER 3	The "McClure Era" (1889-1906)	19
CHAPTER 4	Historical Analysis	27
CHAPTER 5	Theological Reflections	45
CONCLUSION	59	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61	
NOTES	63	

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

v	PREFACE
1	INTRODUCTION
3	CHAPTER 1 Founding of the Station to 1888
13	CHAPTER 2 Siam Mission Reform Party
19	CHAPTER 3 The "McClure Era" (1888-1900)
27	CHAPTER 4 Historical Analysis
42	CHAPTER 5 Theological Reflections
59	CONCLUSION
61	BIBLIOGRAPHY
63	NOTES



PREFACE

This modest book grew out of an article I wrote for a collection of Thai-language articles recently published by the Office of History of the Church of Christ in Thailand.[1] After putting that article aside in its "completed" form, new thoughts and additional insights kept coming to mind, and I decided to rewrite the article in English in a slightly longer form. The process of further reflection and review has finally led to something larger than an article and smaller than a full-length book, which it seemed best to publish in a book format.

The story this case study analyzes is an important one for understanding the Protestant experience in Thailand. It sheds further light upon the great twin failures of nineteenth-century Protestant work in Thailand: the failure to win a large constituency; and the failure to establish strong local Christian communities. Analysis of events in the Phet Buri Station between 1880 and 1900 also brings to light the work of two highly influential missionaries in Phet Buri, neither of whom have received the attention they deserve, namely the Rev. E. P. Dunlap and the Rev. D. G. McClure. Dunlap's career, in particular, should be the subject of close scrutiny. He represents that most enlightening phenomenon of the creative maverick whose unique qualities highlight the more ordinary thoughts and actions of others.

Church history in Thailand is always an intellectual adventure because of the uniquely precarious position of the church historian. The church historian here studies the history of an institution widely regarded as alien to Thai society. The church historian quite naturally draws upon ideas and perspectives taken from the Christian tradition. Thus, a church history written within the context of and about the Thai church appears suspect to a large segment of its potential audience. It addresses subjects of interest to Thai religious history, but in an

unusual manner and from an unusual perspective. At the same time, Thai church history addresses matters of profound importance to Thai Christians, but ignores traditional theological explanations of events in its analysis.

Church historians, in short, appear too religious and parochially Christian for the tastes of a "secular" audience and not religious enough for a church audience. I have tried to keep both non-church and church audiences in mind as I have written this book. The Phet Buri story contains important material for both the history of religion in Thailand and for the self-understanding of the Christian church in Thailand. I trust that the non-church reader will be patient when my Christian agenda becomes too apparent and that those related to the church will be equally patient when the historian's scalpel seems to cut too deeply.

A number of individuals deserve particular thanks for their assistance in the research and writing of this book. Before all else, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of the Church of Christ in Thailand for their continued support of the work of the Office of History. That support makes this book and all of our work possible. I want to thank the Rev. Don Persons, Mr. Bob McIlvride, and the Rev. John Butt for their constructive criticisms of earlier drafts of the book. Thanks go also to Ach. Prasit Pongudom of the Office of History who provided a number of helpful insights from his own research; and my special thanks to Ach. Prasit Saetung for assisting in the printing and publication of this book.

Particular thanks must be given to the staff of the Payap University Archives, the repository of a significant, ever-growing body of primary and secondary sources in Thai Protestant history; and to the fine people of First Presbyterian Church of Howard County, Columbia, Maryland, USA, who through their Mission Committee helped fund the printing of this book.

Herbert R. Swanson



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INTRODUCTION

In the May 1917 issue of the Laos News, a publication of the Presbyterian Laos Mission in northern Thailand, the Rev. J. L. Hartzell described in some detail his work with the Lampang Church of that mission. Near the end of his remarks, Hartzell stated that Christian discipleship was so demanding of those who converted to Christianity that some converts eventually "fell away." He observed that most of those who left the church were "...people who were received too hurriedly or entered the Church with the hope of some material gain uppermost in their minds." Every person, he stated, had to make their own choice as to whether they would serve God or Baal, that is whether they would be faithful Christians or reject the Christian religion. He went on to state,

We want a large Church but first of all we want a church of which we are not ashamed and if this kind of a church must be a small one we prefer it to a large Church containing a large number of people who are a discredit and a hindrance to the faith they profess. We are making progress *toward a clean church* by raising some out of the bog of delinquency, and by disciplining or expelling those who refuse to be raised.[1]

Hartzell's statement deserves attention because it succinctly summarizes an idea widely held among nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Protestant missionaries in Thailand, the concept of a "clean church"

The idea of the clean church goes far back into the history of the Christian church. Second-century North African Christians, for example, heatedly disputed the relationship of the church to "the world" with one side demanding a pure church that accepted as members only those who displayed the highest ethical standards. This

pure church party rejected any applicants for church membership who could not live up to its rigid standards. The other side of the North African argument urged the church to accept all who came to it, train those who did not live up to its standards, and forgive rather than excommunicate those who fell short but repented sincerely.[2]

Over a millennium later, the Protestant Reformation took up the same issue of the purity of the church in its attempt to bring the church back into line with the standards of faith and practice the reformers found in the Bible. English Puritanism originated, subsequently, as a reform movement which sought to restore to the church its ancient purity and simplicity. The Puritans carried that drive for purity to North America where they hoped to establish in New England the model of the "true church." Their search for a purified, reformed church contributed to a wide-spread concern among American Protestants, particularly Congregationalists and Presbyterians, for the reform not only of the church but also all of American society.[3]

Hartzell's call for a clean church, thus, reflected a long-standing theme in Christian history, one clearly present in the American Presbyterian missionaries' own ecclesiastical heritage. That heritage provides the connecting link between the larger stream of church history and the history of a cluster of small Thai churches in late nineteenth-century Phet Buri. The missionaries brought with them a deep concern not only to plant Protestant Christianity in Thailand but also to establish and preserve a "clean church." The course of events in the Presbyterian mission station at Phet Buri in the years after 1889 particularly reveals the power of that concern.

The study of those events in Phet Buri sheds important light on how Protestant missionaries in Thailand gathered together Christian communities. That study also indicates the importance of the missionary image of the clean church for the history of the whole church in Thailand. For it remains true that Thai Protestant history must deal with the fact that Protestantism failed to convert significant numbers of people and failed to establish strong, well-led local churches. The "Phet Buri Case" suggests that the missionary desire to maintain a clean church contributed to these failures.

The events in Phet Buri have a further significance in and of themselves. Church historians and other researchers, including myself,

have examined the questions of why the Protestant missionaries failed to win a large following and failed to create strong local Christian communities from a number of perspectives;[4] and each of those perspectives has provided insights into the historical issues related to Protestant evangelism and church life. But to date we have lacked detailed case studies of particular events, studies which can shed greater light on the larger issues at stake by looking carefully at individual historical cases.

The events which took place in the Presbyterian mission station at Phet Buri in the last two decades of the nineteenth century provide particularly instructive and interesting insights into the history of Protestant evangelism and the history of Thai church life. Between 1880 and 1900 the Phet Buri Station witnessed both unique evangelistic successes and marked evangelistic failure. At times the Station promoted lively congregational life in the churches it established, while at other times it took actions that led to the virtual death of local church life. These spasms of success and failure, growth and decline offer a valuable opportunity to examine at close range key issues related to the question of why the Protestant church attracted so few adherents and failed to establish lively local congregations in central Thailand.

The following chapters, then, recount and analyze the story of the Phet Buri churches and the impact that the idea of the "clean church" had on them. Chapters One through Three focus largely upon events themselves while Chapters Four and Five dissect those events historically and theologically.



CHAPTER ONE

Missionary interest in Phet Buri began with Dr. Dan Beach Bradley of the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.) mission in Bangkok. During the 1850s the "Laos" people living in the Phet Buri area attracted his attention as a potentially ripe evangelistic field. He visited Laos villages in the Phet Buri area in 1859 and then appealed to the A.M.A. for funds to open a station in Phet Buri. Although the home board rejected his plea for support, Bradley succeed in planting his enthusiasm for the Laos in Phet Buri in his daughter, Sophia, and his Presbyterian missionary son-in-law, the Rev. Daniel McGilvary. Within a relatively short time thereafter, the McGilvarys along with the Rev. Samuel G. and Jane McFarland, opened a mission station in Phet Buri in 1861 under the auspices of the Siam Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (P.C.U.S.A.).

The process of opening the new station initially consumed all of the time these two couples invested in their work. When they finally could begin active evangelism among the Laos, the McFarlands and McGilvarys met with an immediate, positive response. The responsiveness of the Laos in the Phet Buri area encouraged the McGilvarys to pursue their vision of a Laos Mission in the northern homeland of the Laos. In late 1866 they withdrew from Phet Buri to prepare for their journey to start a new station in distant Chiang Mai.

When the McGilvarys left Phet Buri, the Rev. S. G. McFarland assumed the role of de facto head of the station, a position he retained until 1878. During his tenure the Station established two churches: the Phet Buri Church in 1863, with three Thai members; and the small Bangkokun Church in 1878. McFarland resigned in that same year of 1878 to take up educational work with the Thai government. His departure set the stage for events in Phet Buri that culminated in the rapid rise and then the abrupt crash of the Phet Buri and Bangkokun churches in later years.

Prior to McFarland's leaving Phet Buri, the Siam Mission sent the Rev. Eugene P. Dunlap to take his place. Dunlap, a new missionary who first arrived in Bangkok in 1875, brought to his work an intense

enthusiasm and deep commitment, along with a winning personality that attracted people at every level of society to him. Dunlap habitually threw himself into his work with complete abandon, and he virtually burst upon the small Phet Buri Station in 1878 like a one-man storm. He arrived in Phet Buri at an auspicious time when the churches there and in other places, notably Bangkok and Chiang Mai, were growing more rapidly numerically. As a result of that growth coupled with Dunlap's enthusiastic leadership, the Phet Buri Church added some thirty-two members to its rolls in 1879, an impressive statistic given the very slow growth of the church since its founding.[1] Mary L. Cort, a missionary colleague in Phet Buri, enthusiastically affirmed that the growth of the work in Phet Buri under Dunlap's leadership resulted from the presence of the Holy Spirit.[2]

Just, however, as the congregation began to show marked growth and improvement, Dunlap's health gave way under the pressure of both the climate and his intense style. His failing health forced him to leave Thailand in October 1879. When members of the Phet Buri church heard that Dunlap was leaving, some of them openly displayed their grief and the congregation generally felt discouraged. It lost much of its enthusiasm.[3]

The Siam Mission faced a constant shortage of seasoned missionaries, and thus it had to appoint another new missionary, the Rev. James M. McCauley, to take over from Dunlap. When he arrived in Phet Buri, McCauley could not speak Thai, and he had little working knowledge of the people and culture. In spite of these obstacles, the church members liked his quiet, kind personality. He, therefore, managed to sustain some of the rate of growth in the church that marked the Dunlap period, and the members of the church continued to attend worship and other activities. But within ten months of his arrival in Phet Buri McCauley too experienced serious health problems and in May 1880 he left Phet Buri to return to the United States.[4]

With the departure of McCauley, the Phet Buri Station and its churches entered a difficult phase. The Siam Mission, again short of personnel, had no male missionaries that it could send to take over the work of the station; and, contrary to the conventions of the day, the mission had to ask the two young women missionaries at the station, Mary Cort and Sarah Coffman, to take over the administration of both

the station and the church. Cort and Coffman faced a number of problems, including the fact that a number of the male members of the church refused to accept women leaders in the church. Among these men was Nai Klai, the chief elder of the church and a man of considerable influence in the congregation. This male resistance caused a great deal of tension in the church as the women missionaries had to suffer through open displays of disrespect and hostility. Yet, even during these difficult times, the missionary leadership of the church sustained some numerical growth and the membership did not withdraw from the congregation.[5]

Although the records available provide relatively few details concerning the inner life of the Phet Buri Church, it seems that the congregation began to drift as soon as Dunlap left. It did not have a strong congregational life that could sustain it through difficult periods of any length. This condition left the congregation quite unprepared to deal with the Rev. C. S. McClelland, the next missionary sent down by the Siam Mission to take over at Phet Buri in 1881. Like McCauley, McClelland was a new missionary who did not yet speak Thai or have a working knowledge of the people he must lead. The similarities between the two men ended there. McClelland had a blunt, direct personality that came across to the people in Phet Buri as harsh. He emphasized, furthermore, church discipline, an emphasis that did not endear him to the members of the Phet Buri Church. In one notable instance he came upon the non-Christian wife of a member of the church, who lived in the mission compound, teaching a Christian woman how to gamble. McClelland insisted that the first woman must move off the compound, and he refused to listen to pleas that she had never violated mission discipline before and would not again. The session[6] also suspended the Christian involved for a period of time. McClelland justified his apparently harsh measures against the gamblers by insisting that he had to protect the purity of the congregation. He stated, "I feel that the church must be kept pure even at the expense of their numbers." He refused to forgive the misdeeds of the two gamblers because he feared that the members of the church would misunderstand any act of leniency.[7]

McClelland's stance on church discipline and his strong personality provoked an immediate response from the church's

membership. Attendance at worship dwindled, and Nai Klai, the leading elder, refused to cooperate with McClelland to the extent that he eventually withdrew from the church entirely—taking a significant number of members with him—and began to harass the missionaries. Mary Cort reported the missionaries felt distressed over the way their relations with the members had deteriorated.[8] By 1882, however, McClelland and his family also experienced serious health problems and, in their turn, left for the United States never to return to Thailand. McClelland left behind him a stagnant church comprised of indifferent church members and a situation in which the general populous in Phet Buri no longer showed any interest in Christianity. Only those directly in mission employ continued to attend worship and associate themselves with the church. At the Bangkabun Church no one attended worship at all, and the people there advised an elder sent out from Phet Buri to tear down the chapel in Bangkabun because no one wanted to associate themselves with the church under the "new regime" in charge of the Christian community. The people missed McFarland, Dunlap, and Nai Klai.[9]

Just at this time and after a long period of recuperation in the United States, E. P. Dunlap returned to Phet Buri in early 1883, and the Phet Buri Church revived immediately. Between February and May of 1883 the formerly moribund church baptized sixteen adults and six children, and at the August communion service it joyfully celebrated the reception of fifteen converts and the election of two new elders. The church building was so full that day that chairs and benches had to be brought in to accommodate the overflow crowd.[10] Dunlap's leadership also led to a revival of the Bangkabun Church to such an extent that he established an inquirer's class to accommodate potential converts. Dunlap also persuaded the congregation at Bangkabun to donate funds to help build a Christian chapel in another village. After its November 1884 communion service, the Bangkabun Church held an impromptu congregational meeting which also resolved to build a new chapel at Bangkabun because the old chapel could not hold all who attended worship.[11]

In both churches former members returned to the fold. And in addition to this general restoration of the work, Nai Klai, whose actions always drew the most missionary attention, also came to

Dunlap and confessed he had acted wrongly in resisting the other missionaries. At his request, the church accepted him back into its membership. Dunlap also revived the evangelistic efforts of the station and especially emphasized rural evangelism. His efforts in this direction led to the founding of two more churches, one at Pak Thale in January 1884, and the other at Tha Rua Banphai in July 1885.[12]

Dunlap's style of leadership contrasted sharply with McClelland's, particularly with regard to the use of church discipline. As soon as he arrived in Phet Buri in 1880, as we have seen, McClelland began to pay close attention to the behavior of the members of the Phet Buri Church, and when he discovered improprieties he reported them to the session for disciplinary action. Thus, in its meetings on the 25th and 26th of December 1880, the session excommunicated one member for entering the Buddhist monkhood and another both for long failing to attend worship and for publicly renouncing Christianity. The session excommunicated another two members for gambling. In the following year, the session disciplined other members for extramarital sexual relations, for gambling, for intoxication, for secretly attending temple festivities, and for disobeying the session itself.[13] McClelland's reliance on discipline to instruct and correct church members and his use of the Phet Buri Church Session to exercise that discipline reflected traditional Presbyterian polity concerning the role of the session. That polity regarded the session as a church court responsible for maintaining the theological and moral purity of the local congregation.

Dunlap exercised disciplinary oversight of the Phet Buri Church in a manner very different from McClelland. Dunlap tended to bring disciplinary questions to the session much less frequently than McClelland; and when the session did call offending members before it, Dunlap preferred to warn them, rather than excommunicate or suspend members whose behavior violated church standards. Thus, on March 26, 1884, the session investigated one member accused of drunkenness, another accused of gambling, and another accused of violating the Sabbath. The session, under Dunlap's leadership, warned and instructed each of these individuals separately without exacting any other punishment. At times, however, Dunlap's leadership of the

session did lead it to take more direct disciplinary measures. The session, for example, suspended two other members accused of extramarital affairs from taking the sacrament of communion, one for a single communion and the other for an indefinite period. Towards the end of Dunlap's second period in Phet Buri, in the years 1885 and 1886, the session examined almost no cases of church discipline at all.[14] Dunlap did not eschew church discipline per se, but he argued that the church should exercise discipline on the basis of its value to the person disciplined. He acknowledged that missionaries had a responsibility to discipline church members, but he felt that discipline must be mixed with love and grace.[15]

One might divide the decade of the 1880s into two general periods according to the type of missionary leadership the church experienced. During the years when "caring" missionaries led the Phet Buri Church the congregation grew in numbers and seems to have had a relatively active church life. During those years, on the other hand, when the members of the church felt that the missionary leadership was not generous or caring, the church immediately declined in numbers and in active participation by members.

In the period from 1883 to 1886, Dunlap gave particular attention to the problem of the congregations' dependency on foreign money for support by emphasizing stewardship and giving. He reported mild success in getting the church members to give more generously to the church.[16] He also instituted a stricter policy concerning the reception of converts into the church. In order to insure that converts joined the church from "proper" motives, Dunlap saw that each applicant for membership underwent a two-month waiting period after she or he requested membership, received basic Christian education instruction, and passed a strict examination prior to reception for membership.[17] In the light of later events, we must call particular attention to these policies. They indicate that Dunlap shared something of McClelland's concern for a pure, a "clean church." Dunlap himself acknowledged the need for careful church discipline, but he emphasized purposeful discipline that sought changes in behavior. He believed that gentler forms of discipline usually gained better results.[18]

Dunlap's pastoral attitudes opened many doors in terms of

personal relationships. Other missionaries reported that he had a steady stream of visitors, both Christian and non-Christian, who came to him seeking his help and his advice. Some came to ask about Christianity. Others asked him to mediate interpersonal problems. Those who called upon his assistance trusted him to the extent that they generally followed his advice.[19] The Phet Buri Church itself thrived in the pastoral environment created by Dunlap, and the years 1882 to 1886 marked a period of growth and harmony in the life of the congregation.

Dunlap led a relatively active church in Phet Buri. His station report for 1886 reports that in addition to the Sunday School (7 teachers and 130 students), the church had a Foreign Mission and Bible Society and a rapidly growing woman's missionary society of 38 members led by Mary Cort. Cort also superintended the work of three Bible women who visited both members and non-members.[20]

Problems existed, however, which threw shadows across this otherwise bright scene. Dunlap himself observed that giving pastoral care to a Christian church located in the midst of a non-Christian culture and society posed difficult problems. In the case of Phet Buri, the larger culture constantly sought to pull converts away from their new faith and back to traditional religion. Dunlap felt that he should visit the members of the church as frequently as possible and encourage them in prayer, the reading of the Bible, and involving themselves in Christian activities in order to counter-act the danger that they might fall back into the larger society "outside." But Dunlap simply did not have time to carry out the myriad duties of running a mission station, conducting an active evangelistic program, and pastoring a church filled with new converts. His own sense of evangelistic duty and calling did not allow him to cease active involvement in evangelism in order to pastor those already converted.[21] The Siam Mission did not have sufficient personnel to send him assistance. Difficult interpersonal relationships between missionaries also kept him from concentrating on his pastoral duties.[22] At the very time when the growing church at Phet Buri needed particular pastoral attention, circumstances prevented a man who had the skills to give that attention from doing so.

The Phet Buri Church stood upon the fragile base of Dunlap's personality. So powerful was his personal influence that everyone in

Phet Buri considered him the "head of the Christians." People at every level of local society felt comfortable with him and held him in esteem. When members of the royal family and other officials visited Phet Buri they often made it a point to call on Dunlap because they realized that the station's work was important to the community. They gave money to support the educational and medical work of the station, and Dunlap occasionally used his relationship with these members of the social elite to get funds for projects he wanted to carry out.[23]

Everything, then, depended on Dunlap. It should have come as no surprise that in this high-pressure situation Dunlap's health once again broke. He was a man in a great hurry to fulfill his Christian duty as a missionary, and he drove himself mercilessly. He refused to listen to doctor's orders and pleas to get rest and take care of himself. Dunlap himself reported that he nearly died twice during the early months of 1888. Finally, in June 1888 he had to give up all his work and take an extended leave to rest. He eventually left the station and returned once again to the United States for a health furlough.[24]

Dunlap's illness and his leaving created an unstable situation in the Phet Buri Station and its churches. The "native" workers had to pick up much of the slack, but they were unable to carry on with church work as vigorously as Dunlap. The life of the church began to decline.[25] In the 1928 centennial history of Protestant missions in Thailand, the Rev. John A. Eakin, who later worked in Phet Buri, wrote the chapter on the history of the Phet Buri station. In that chapter Eakin praised Dunlap as an earnest, spiritual, sympathetic, generous person and went on to state that when Dunlap left the bottom fell out of the work at Phet Buri.[26] Although not apparent at the time, Dunlap's leaving marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Phet Buri station—particularly because those who followed him sought to make a definite break with the past he represented.



CHAPTER TWO

The Phet Buri station's entry into a new era took place within a larger context of events in the Siam Mission, and subsequent events in Phet Buri make sense only within that context. In 1884 the Rev. Egon Wachter, a Protestant convert from Catholicism and a native of Germany, joined the Siam Mission and eventually took charge of the First Presbyterian Church of Bangkok, generally known as the Samray Church. By early 1888, Wachter began expressing serious discontent concerning the quality of members in the Samray Church. He complained that they cared only for personal gain. They had converted for purely "worldly" reasons that had nothing to do with true Christian faith, and they showed no interest in salvation, caring only about their own comfort and advantage. All the converts wanted of Christianity, he felt, was for the missionaries to be their patrons so that they had financial security and influential help when they needed it. The members of the Samray Church, he insisted, knew nothing about self-giving or self-sacrifice. Wachter claimed that part of the problem grew out of the fact that the converts had never known a "true religion" before and thus had no frame of reference for being true Christians.[1]

Wachter argued that church members such as these hindered the spread of Christianity in Thailand because they themselves did not live pure Christian lives nor give a pure Christian witness to others. He held that the success of missionary evangelism in Thailand depended upon the preaching of the "pure Gospel." Wachter believed that the Christian message could not be changed nor adapted in any manner, neither in terms of doctrines nor in terms of ethical norms. The pure Gospel came from God and the Siam Mission's evangelistic success depended entirely upon its ability to maintain the purity of the Gospel it preached. He wrote, "I firmly believe that the pure gospel without any additions and supplements will exercise a greater power than all the means which may be in use to make it acceptable." [2] Wachter emphasized the undesirability of trying to attract converts with any form of social or pecuniary benefits.

In January 1889 Wachter wrote a letter to the Presbyterian

Board of Foreign Missions in New York in which he argued that Christianity in Thailand would attain prominence in the eyes of the people only when it clearly emphasized the quality of its converts rather than quantity. Raising Christianity in the estimation of the people must be done even if it meant sacrificing numbers of converts. He stated,

We must bear witness of Christ and his religion in our words and works and leave the rest to God. The church on earth has one great duty to perform: to witness for Christ in the world which either does not know Christ or having known him rejects him.

Such witnessing, he further urged, did not mean taking in anyone who wants to become a Christian. It meant accepting only people of pure intentions, because such people were inherently fit to witness to the gospel. Those who converted from pure motives displayed a zeal and willingness to serve that the impure did not. The impure exhibited only restlessness, a greedy desire for position, and an inclination to cause trouble. Wachter thought it best to keep them out of the church entirely. He concluded, "I believe that by a constant, faithful witnessing for Christ the right idea of Christ and his truth will take hold of the Siamese and then we may expect better results." [3] Wachter advised the Siam Mission to change its policies regarding new converts: money should never be used as an inducement to conversion; the mission should correct Thai society's general understanding that the Mission would take anybody who wanted to convert; and the mission should teach Thai society that "true religion" was not a matter of personal pleasure and benefit. [4]

Wachter's concerns call to mind Hartzell's expressed concern for a clean church in Lampang with which this book began. That concern fixed upon purity of conversion and of moral behavior as *the* standard by which it measured all other matters, including the number of converts won. Wachter, Hartzell, and the majority of the Presbyterian missionaries in both northern and central Thailand agreed that mere numbers could not bring about the triumph of the Christian religion in Thailand. Only a clean church could convert the whole nation.

Wachter's principles of a "clean church" had a strong impact on the whole Siam Mission and played an important role in Presbyterian missionary thinking in Thailand. After 1885 an informal grouping of younger missionaries in the Siam Mission dedicated themselves to fostering the clean church idea in the mission. They accepted Wachter's analysis of the motivations of most converts, and they accepted his premise that a purification of the churches would correct the error of having previously admitted impure converts. The principles of this "reform movement" in the Siam Mission had a particularly strong impact on the Phet Buri Station, which emerged as a key bastion for preserving the purity of the church and a primary testing ground for the principles advanced by Wachter and the reform missionaries.

This reform party must not be thought of as an aberration in Presbyterian missionary history in Thailand. They based their principles of reform on ideas widely held throughout the American evangelical movement. Evangelicals, including the nineteenth-century Presbyterian missionaries, generally believed that every society had fundamentally the same characteristics and that all people everywhere shared the same set of needs and desires. Human nature, including the religious side of humanity, was everywhere the same. [5] They believed, furthermore, that there was only one system of truth in the world. Truth could not be divided into segments. The Christian message stood at the pinnacle of that system of truth, and it should not be changed or adapted to particular situations in any significant way. In those places where social understandings differed from the Gospel, as they did in Thailand, the missionaries must work to change society while preserving the purity of the Gospel.

The reform missionaries accounted for the apparent defects in the converts in Thailand discerned by Wachter and others as spiritual and moral defects. That is, when the converts appeared to act selfishly from the missionaries' point of view, that meant they *were* acting selfishly. Differences in cultural understanding could play no important role in accounting for convert behavior because the missionaries believed that human beings were alike in all times and places. This understanding of human nature made it clear to the reform missionaries that the "problem" of the converts was a moral and spiritual one. The converts were greedy and they did not understand the meaning of true

conversion.

In the years before the middle and late 1880s, the Presbyterian missionaries tempered this ideological conception of the unity of the human race with their experience of Thai sociocultural realities. Among other things, they sometimes gave financial, legal, or medical aid to the converts. They found that in order to win a following they sometimes had to act like beneficent patrons. It was this practice, as seen above, that Wachter and others objected to; and by the end of the decade of the 1880s the voice of the "reformers" dominated the councils of the mission.

Factors of health and climate played a key part in allowing the young reformers to gain control of the Siam Mission. The Siam Mission, always a small mission of limited personnel and resources, had long suffered from the impact of the climate on its missionaries. Frequent illness forced many to return to the United States, often permanently. This led to a constant coming and going among the missionaries which introduced a note of impermanence and uncertainty regarding missionary church leadership. In the years following 1888, the mission reached a point where no senior, experienced male missionaries remained on the field. Thus, when Dunlap left the field because of illness in 1889 the administration of the mission fell entirely in the hands of younger, less experienced male missionaries who had only a limited knowledge of Thailand and spoke Thai less well than the older missionaries.[6]

Among these younger missionaries, Wachter's perspective concerning the selfishness of most Christian converts and the need for new policies and stricter discipline carried great weight; and they sought ways to overcome the supposed weaknesses of past policies. Wachter himself led the way when he instituted a new set of policies in the Samray Church in 1888. He refused to lend or give members money for any reason, and he also refused to help them extract themselves from legal difficulties. Wachter reported that immediately upon the introduction of these policies the rate of conversions and the receipt of new members dropped to almost zero.[7] The following year the mission moved Dr. James B. Thompson to Rat Buri to establish a new station there, and Thompson applied Wachter's principles to that new station. He experienced the same results. There had been three

or four potential converts living in Rat Buri who had become interested in Christianity through contacts with Dunlap. They quickly dropped their interest and refrained from any relationship with the new Rat Buri Station. The general populace showed no interest at all in the station.[8]

Having won the day at Samray and in Rat Buri, the reform party next sought to make the policy of not providing any "temporal aid" to converts a formal part of the rules of the Siam Mission. They presented a series of motions to the annual meetings of 1890 and 1891 which very strictly limited the ways missionaries could help church members. The mission accepted the policies so proposed, and the views of Wachter and Thompson became rules of the Siam Mission. Among other things the new rules ended the freeing of debt slaves and providing loans, even from personal funds, for "natives" by the missionaries.[9]

The Siam Mission's regulations against temporal aid carried great weight with the Mission. In the mid-1890s, to cite an important example, the Mission hesitated to provide the Rev. Boon-Itt with a full missionary salary. Though born in Thailand, Boon-Itt was taken to the United States as a boy of eleven and grew up there. When he finished seminary, he returned to Thailand, ostensibly as a missionary. His status and salary became a matter of concern, partly because the Mission feared that if he received a full salary he would use it in violation of the Mission's policy of no temporal aid. Being Thai, they reasoned, he would be expected to support his relatives and others. Some of the missionaries feared Boon-Itt would excite greed among the Christians and gain a "superficial" popularity at the expense of the other missionaries. They feared a return to the old ways at Phet Buri.[10]

These events set the stage for all that took place in Phet Buri after Dunlap left the station in 1888. For a new set, indeed a new generation of missionaries assumed management of the station and its churches. That new generation rejected out of hand much of what had taken place in Phet Buri in the preceding three decades. They set a new course, one based on the principles of the clean church as set forth by Wachter.



CHAPTER THREE

During the decade from McFarland's resignation in 1878 until Dunlap's second departure in 1888, the Christian community in Phet Buri experienced topsy-turvy rounds of advance, drift, and decline as one missionary leader after another came and went. From the year 1889 on, however, the rounds of advance and decline shifted into an era of decline and drift with few signs of advance to cheer the Christian community. The era of drift and decline was unavoidably linked to the work of the next missionary assigned to Phet Buri by the Siam Mission, the Rev. William G. McClure. McClure first arrived in Bangkok in 1886, where he began his missionary career working with Mr. Wachter at the Boy's School. In 1887, due to a continuing shortage of missionaries, McClure took over full responsibility for the school, and then the Mission transferred McClure in early 1889 to take Dunlap's place at Phet Buri.

When McClure arrived in Phet Buri, he found the church there suffering in the aftermath of a controversy between Dr. James B. Thompson, a medical missionary who went to Phet Buri in 1886, and the other members of the Session of the Phet Buri Church. Dr. Thompson himself was an elder in the church and thus a member of the Session. The controversy arose over Nai Klai's gambling habit, a habit he readily admitted to and refused to give up. Thompson wanted the session to take disciplinary actions against Nai Klai, but Dunlap refused. The other members of the session were equally unwilling to take action. The resulting tension between Thompson and Dunlap spilled over into the church. It also turned Thompson into one of Dunlap's harshest critics. He believed that Dunlap did not maintain the purity and discipline of the church as he should and gave too much "worldly" aid to church members and prospective converts.[1]

McClure, thus, inherited a discouraging situation compounded not only by Dunlap's departure, but also by the bitter residue left over from Thompson's presence. Many members of the church had already withdrawn from active participation in its life, and McClure felt that

the church was nearly dead as a result of its weakened condition. He observed that the members of the church displayed a weak, childish faith, and many of the inactive members had returned to a "life of sin" that involved immoral behavior. He concluded that he must institute a system of strict discipline in order to rectify the situation.[2]

To some extent, however, McClure seems to have overstated the actual condition of the church. His 1889 annual report for the station states that some 60 members still attended worship in Phet Buri Church on an average Sunday, while about six per week attended each of the village churches. He noted that most of the Thai staff continued to do reasonably good work.[3] Mary Cort reported that both the women's missionary society and the women's temperance group continued to meet although they were less active than previously. The Phet Buri Church's Christmas service drew an attendance of 224.[4] These reports suggest that some eighteen months after Dunlap left the churches, particularly the mother church in Phet Buri, still had viable congregational lives.

McClure, however, saw things in a darker light and believed that the situation he faced arose out of the policies followed by Dunlap, which policies did not insure that new church members came into the church with pure motives. He accused Dunlap of having taken too positive and hopeful an attitude towards church members and of treating members who misbehaved too leniently. McClure's attitude that all of the problems he faced in Phet Buri arose out of the actions of others in the past eventually hardened into a bias that played a key role in everything that he did in the following years.[5] He maintained throughout his service in Phet Buri that he must make a clean break with the policies of the past. McClure tried, nonetheless, to maintain a fair and neutral personal attitude towards Dunlap, the one he held most immediately responsible for the weaknesses of the church at Phet Buri. McClure stated that Dunlap did not intentionally follow a policy of lax church discipline but, rather, simply followed policies and procedures that had been handed down to him from the past.[6]

Dr. Thompson showed much less reticence in attacking Dunlap personally and did not agree that the problems at Phet Buri amounted to only a matter of systems and policies. In an emotional, angry report to the Board of Foreign Missions in early 1890, Thompson

surveyed the state of the Phet Buri Church and laid the fault for that state at the feet of Dunlap. Some eighty per cent of the members, he reported, had left the church and returned to live in a "state of sin." They dishonored the Sabbath by engaging in buying and selling on Sunday. Several of the families that had withdrawn sewed robes that Buddhists presented to monks. Thompson charged that this activity put them in complicity with the merit-making activities of Buddhism, something which the Presbyterian missionaries generally held to be sinful. Thompson also accused the Thai elders on the session of obstructing McClure's efforts to reform the church.

Thompson accused Dunlap of preaching "a gospel of temporal help" by which he enticed people to convert to Christianity. He claimed, for example, that Dunlap encouraged debt slaves to convert and then when they demanded money to buy their freedom Dunlap always gave in to them. Dunlap attracted people involved in legal problems with promises of assistance in court if they became Christians. Thompson complained that Dunlap seldom disciplined sin, and he generally followed a policy of helping "native Christians" gain "temporal advantage" while shutting his eyes to their faults. Thompson avowed that Dunlap's policies had a catastrophic affect on the church and had even infected the Christians in Bangkok with a spirit of discontent because they did not receive the same privileges as those in Phet Buri. In this report Thompson also provided the solution to the situation at Phet Buri: "...go to work like men and servants of God to bring about reform." Such reform, he felt, would possibly reclaim only a few of those who had wandered away from the church; but duty, in any event, demanded that the station undertake strict reform.[7]

Thompson and McClure both disagreed and agreed concerning the role of Dunlap at Phet Buri. On the one hand, McClure did not blame Dunlap personally for the situation he faced at Phet Buri while Thompson did. They both, on the other hand, consistently emphasized the fact that the problems in the Phet Buri Church arose out of its past and could not be blamed on those who inherited them. Both argued that the members had been self-seeking converts from the beginning, and Thompson went so far as to refer to them as "those heathen Christians at Petchburee." [8] McClure and Thompson took no responsibility for the decline of the church which took place under their leadership, nor

could they accept that the members who left might have had legitimate reasons for doing so.

Not everyone in the Siam Mission agreed with McClure and Thompson's view on the issues at Phet Buri, particularly Mary Cort, who by 1889 was the senior member in years of service of both the Phet Buri Station and the entire Siam Mission. She first arrived in Thailand in 1874, while McFarland still directed the work in Phet Buri. Thus, Cort knew the work and the history of the station, and on the basis of her personal understanding she sided with Dunlap. She praised him as an excellent missionary who preached well, led exceptionally interesting Bible studies, and treated others patiently and generously.[9]

She responded to the the younger missionaries' criticisms of Dunlap by observing that he was the most diligent, earnest, self-giving missionary she'd known in Thailand. He had an intense love of Christ and commitment to missions. Drawing on I Corinthians 13, she claimed that Dunlap was patient, kind, believed and hoped all things, and endured all things. He gave his goods to feed the poor, and if he erred it was on the side of Christian love. The members of the Phet Buri Church loved Dunlap because when they were in need he helped them as much as he possibly could. He dealt with them patiently even when they disappointed him. As Cort saw it, Dunlap concerned himself more with showing church members love and understanding than trying to maintain church discipline. She reported that, on occasion, Dunlap had expressed to her a feeling that he sometimes gave church members too much money. Cort stated that she agreed with Dunlap that he sometimes did give too much to the converts. But she preferred his his inclination to give too much to the inclinations of McClure, who seemed hard-hearted and unloving by comparison.[10]

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. McClure represented the view of most of the younger missionaries who came to the Siam Mission in the 1880s :that strict church discipline offered the best way to teach converts Christian ethics. Dunlap disagreed. Some few years after he left Phet Buri, Dunlap wrote a letter to the Board in New York defending his work in Phet Buri. He admitted that he made mistakes during his years there and should have withheld

gifts he gave, but the deep needs of the people moved him to overlook the harm he might do in helping them. He, furthermore, was not wrong in every case and in some he "...simply followed the direction of the Master." It would have been sinful to "smother my compassion." Dunlap argued that he never used such help to win converts. He wrote, "I'd rather lose my right arm." [11]

The differences between McClure and Dunlap call to mind the same contrast between the leadership styles of McClelland and Dunlap described in some detail in Chapter One. After Thompson arrived in Phet Buri in 1887 and McClure took over in 1889 the number of cases brought to the Session rose markedly from Dunlap's tenure, although the punishments meted out remained relatively mild. That mildness may have been due in part to the fact that McClure was not as aggressive as McClelland had been and to the fact that the Thai elders on the Session resisted harsh measures.[12]

When McClure took over from Dunlap at Phet Buri in early 1889, he inherited, as we have seen, a difficult situation in which many members had already removed themselves from participation in the church in reaction against the leadership of Dr. Thompson. The Phet Buri churches of 1889, however, still had some life in them. Their situation continued to decline under McClure's leadership. Whereas the members had loved and respected Dunlap, they disliked McClure because he seemed to lack concern for them. They cited the fact that previously the station distributed medicines free to Christians, but McClure ended that policy and required them to buy medicine from the station at the same price others paid. The members complained that whereas Dunlap intervened with the courts for them when they ran into legal problems McClure refused to do so.[13] An 1895 report to the Siam Presbytery [14] summarized the situation at Phet Buri by recording the church members' claim that McClure did not sympathize with them and intended to drive them out of the churches.[15] McClure knew how the people felt, that he seemed to them unkind because he refused to give them financial and other types of help. But, from his point of view, this very attitude about him only further proved that the members of the churches cared only for money and "temporal" advantages.[16]

McClure sided with the "reform party" described in Chapter Two, and when the Siam Mission issued its rules forbidding the missionaries from giving temporal aid to converts, McClure strictly enforced the new rules of the mission in Phet Buri with serious negative consequences for the churches in the Phet Buri area. The members of the churches did not accept the new rules and refused to follow the leadership of those who enforced them. By 1891 things had already reached such a low state that McClure felt they could go no lower.

But things did get worse. The Siam Presbytery, at McClure's request, removed Phet Buri's two ruling elders from their positions as licentiates for ordained ministry because they were not carrying out their duties and because of improprieties in their behavior.[17] Nai Klai was one of these two elders, and since he remained a highly influential leader in the Phet Buri Church, his punishment by removal from office only created further disaffection in the church. Throughout the McClure era the members in general refused to attend worship, did not participate in any church activities, and did not publicly display any aspects of or attachment to their Christian faith.[18] At roughly this same time, 1891, McClure began a more active program of evangelism, but no one expressed any serious interest in converting to Christianity. The Phet Buri Church continued its decline.[19]

At the end of 1891, McClure gathered statistics on the state of the church and found that the church had only 57 full members left on its rolls while 93 had been moved to the inactive rolls for failure to attend worship. The session had excommunicated another 21 members. Many of those 57 remaining members did not live what McClure considered to be acceptable Christian lives.[20] These 1891 membership figures simply confirmed ones cited by McClure a year earlier. In his 1890 annual report, McClure found that 253 full members had joined the Phet Buri Church since its founding. Of those 253, 150 remained full members. Of those 150, only twenty regularly attended worship. Of the twenty, two were missionaries, fourteen were employees of the station, and three were wives of employees. The church had only one active member not employed by the Mission.[21]

The condition of the Phet Buri churches did not improve after 1891. In 1893 Mrs. Jeannie McClure stated that only eight out of a previous membership of 250 remained active in the Phet Buri

Church.[22] Statistics of this type led Dr. Thompson to write in 1894 that the Phet Buri Church had died.[23]. In 1896 McClure himself stated that the missionaries stationed in Phet Buri felt saddened at the fact that all around the mission compound lived Christians who refused to participate in the life of the church.

Yet, he still affirmed that all of the problems at Phet Buri had started with the mistaken policy of giving church members temporal assistance. He worried over the fact that some missionaries still adhered to that old policy. While giving converts financial, legal, and other assistance made it easy to win large numbers of converts and created excitement in the churches for a time, McClure insisted that such a policy only led to trouble and discouragement in the end. The experience of the Phet Buri Station provided him with a clear, unforgettable example of the consequences of giving temporal aid to converts.[24] Thus, even after seven years of fruitless struggle under the reformed policy of the mission regarding assisting converts, McClure remained steadfastly committed to the principles of that policy.

In the years after 1896, he continued to pursue the goal of a purified "clean church." The records of the Phet Buri Church indicate that, if anything, he and his missionary colleagues adhered to that policy more stringently than ever. They continued to call to account in session meetings those members who violated the norms established for the church. They exercised great caution in receiving new members, often making applicants wait many months before the church received them in order to test the purity of their intentions.[25]

At a few points during the 1890s, the Phet Buri situation did seem to improve somewhat. In 1898, for example, the McClures' detected signs that the church was reviving as a result of a series of special meetings held with the members. Those meetings seemed to give the Phet Buri Church's members an uplift. At this same time, the Sunday School witnessed an increased attendance.[26] Such moments provided only a brief improvement and did nothing to correct the general sense of gloom and drift that enfolded the Phet Buri Station in the 1890s.

As McClure approached a full ten years of service at Phet Buri he wrote a letter in October 1898 to the Board regarding the preceding

decade. He acknowledged that the members who had left the Phet Buri Church in the late 1880s still had not returned to the church. He had no hope for them now. He also had no hope for the little churches out in the country and felt that at least three of the four rural Phet Buri congregations should be closed. He noted that in the decade since 1889 the Phet Buri Church had received only about 25 new members, and even that number included several non-ordained missionaries. Of these few new members, McClure reported that only one was not an employee of the station.[27]

McClure continued to oversee the Phet Buri Station and Church until 1906, although he was away from Phet Buri for several extended periods in the years just before 1906. The church and station remained in much the same condition as before. The station's evangelistic efforts converted only mission employees and the churches contained only a handful of members. The "McClure Era" in the history of the Phet Buri Church closed, then, on a sombre note. When the Rev. J. A. Eakin Family moved to Phet Buri in 1907 to take the McClures' place, Mrs. Altha L. Eakin wrote,

We came back to find the work in a pitiable condition. The first Sunday we went to church in a pouring rain. Only a few were out, only one woman; we were told she was the only faithful Christian woman of Petchaburee. She is old and ignorant and cannot read.[27]

In a sad, nearly tragic manner, that lone illiterate but faithful older Christian woman symbolizes for us the nearly twenty years of Phet Buri church history from the time Dunlap left and McClure took over to the time McClure finally left Phet Buri. It was an era with little joy marked largely by a passive, lifeless church and a perplexed, troubled missionary leadership.



CHAPTER FOUR

Two closely related issues dominated the history of the Phet Buri Station and churches in the years after 1880. Those issues were the exercise of discipline as a way to instruct and correct church members and the use of material and social inducements to attract converts. Both Dunlap and the reform party, in theory, agreed that the missionaries had to maintain a certain level of church discipline and that they should not use inducements to win converts. Both sought the goal of a clean church purified of selfish motivations and immoral behavior.

But the reformers and Dunlap differed in their application of these broad principles of missionary practice. Dunlap's generosity and enthusiastic personality apparently induced many to convert who did so out of a mixture of motives which violated the reformers' standards of purity of motive. At the same time, Dunlap exercised a tempered, relatively infrequent discipline which left the impression with some of his colleagues that he was soft on sin. The reform party, in contrast, strived for a clean church by persistently and frequently disciplining wayward members and by entirely forbidding giving money and other forms of aid to converts. They left themselves open to the charge that they were unloving and lacking in generosity.

The history of the Phet Buri churches down to 1906 shows that by the measures of numbers of converts, levels of giving, the interest and involvement of church members in church activities, and a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit Dunlap enjoyed far greater success in Phet Buri than did his successors. That success requires further reflection upon its meaning both historically and for the present. For what that success suggests is that a much larger, more lively church might have been possible in Phet Buri. And even that bare possibility ought to give pause for thought.

Three significant factors contributed to the events described in the preceding chapters. In the first place, McClure's own personal beliefs enabled him to persist in a set of policies that even he acknow-

ledged appeared to fail to lead the Phet Buri churches into a lively spring time of growth and renewal. Secondly, cultural differences between the missionaries and the members of the churches created a chasm of misunderstanding neither side could bridge. Finally, the personalities of those involved in the Phet Buri case contributed to the unfolding of events in the manner in which they took place. Taken together these three factors help us to understand the "logic" of the events in Phet Buri.

In one sense it might seem strange that we would focus here on McClure's beliefs instead of those of Dunlap. Dunlap apparently contributed to the failure to create a strong Christian movement in Phet Buri by his personal emphasis on evangelism. He knew that the churches under his care required close pastoral attention, but his evangelistic commitment pulled him away from that task. At the same time, his own intense personal style caused him to behave irresponsibly regarding his own health. He did not take care of himself, and the fact that he had to leave Phet Buri twice for health reasons had a devastating impact on the churches there.

On the whole, however, Dunlap enjoyed considerable success both as an evangelist and as a pastor. In terms of actual events, the Christian movement in Phet Buri all but died because of the ministry of the Rev. W. G. McClure and because of the rigid policies he pursued over the course of many years. One cannot help but ask why McClure persistently rejected Dunlap's methods rather than imitate them when his own policies failed. The question of why McClure persevered in following his "new policies" year after year for nearly two full decades stands out as a key question for the Phet Buri case.

McClure, as already indicated, conducted his ministry as a corrective to the situation he inherited, one he believed dangerous to the future of the Phet Buri Church. He held that the policies of Dunlap and other former missionaries encouraged a loose, faithless, selfish Christianity which he had to correct by a radical change in the relationship between missionary and convert. It is a striking fact, however, that the new measures instituted by McClure to protect the purity of the churches did not promote their purity and only served to frustrate the station's evangelistic efforts.

The argument of the reform party that the quality of converts

carried more weight than "mere numbers" does not provide a sufficient response to the question of why McClure followed his new policies so intently for so long. By his own admission, the quality of converts did not change in the years after 1888. Nearly every convert who joined the Phet Buri Church in the McClure era depended upon the mission for their living. McClure himself suspected the motives of such converts, noting that they usually disappeared from the church the moment they ceased to work for the station.[1] The available historical data indicates that McClure's policy of not helping converts financially, legally, or in other ways resulted only in driving away all members not directly dependent on mission employment. It did not improve the purity of the church. It did not garner more highly and properly motivated converts. The question remains: why did McClure continue to follow policies and evince attitudes that did not work?

The answer to the question of McClure's unwillingness to change lies in significant part in the world view and the theology he brought to his work. Two elements of that world view particularly influenced McClure in his persistent implementation of a failed policy. First of all, he believed in a coming "millennium" for Thailand when the whole Thai nation would convert to the Christian faith. He expressed that view clearly in his first days at Phet Buri. After surveying the discouraging situation he faced there in early 1889, McClure wrote:

Our constant prayer and hope is that God may be pleased ere long to pour out His Spirit and bless the work here in such a way as it never has been blessed before. There seems never to have been what might be called a revival in Siam. But surely the day is coming when God will make his power felt here as He has in other heathen lands. We believe that He will [and] that the extensive sowing of the past will result in an abundant harvest ere many years hence. Hence we labor on fighting against discouragement.[2]

Just as the great majority of American evangelicals in the late nineteenth century looked for a great coming day when God would usher in the millennium of peace and justice, so McClure looked for such a day in

Thailand as well. And just as the majority of American evangelicals vaguely assumed that the golden age of the millennium would emerge gradually, progressively, so McClure expected in a vague way that Thailand would become a Christian nation naturally—not miraculously or magically, but through God's working within history.[3] He expected a "localized millennium" that would transform Thailand into a truly Christian nation.

McClure never wavered in his belief in that localized millennium. In 1893 he wrote, "I believe the blessed day will come, God's set time to favor Zion." On that "blessed day" all of the past efforts of the missionaries must bear fruit.[4] In March 1899 he marked a full decade at Phet Buri by recalling that in biblical times Jesus had accomplished great things even though the people had despised and rejected him. He looked for similar great results in Siam and even wondered if the increasingly rapid advent of social change in Thai society might not be the prelude to the Christianization of Thailand.[5] A few months later, in August 1899, McClure affirmed, "We believe also that the time is coming for a great manifestation of God's power in the conversion of the Siamese." [6]

Ernest Tuveson, in his study of American millennialism, describes historically how millennialism influenced people's thinking. First of all, believers in the millennium expected it to appear as an objective period in human history. Secondly, belief in the coming millennium assured millennialists of the ultimate victory of Christianity. Thus, they directed all of their attention and energies towards the future knowing that their cause must win out over any temporary set backs of the moment. Millennialists, thirdly, held themselves duty-bound to prepare for the good times that they believed were certain to come.[7]

These points succinctly summarize McClure's attitude as he reflected upon his personal situation at Phet Buri. He expected that he would see the coming of a real, a historical new day in Thailand generally and in Phet Buri particularly. The coming of that day did not depend on human agency for its coming. God alone would bring it. The attainment of that new day, furthermore, did not depend upon the immediate success of his own policies but on his adhering to the will of God. He believed that the policies of the past as followed by McFarland and Dunlap before him led only to problems and insincere

conversions, and he knew that the situation in Phet Buri demanded reform and that reform meant the strict exercise of church discipline. He absolutely knew these things. In 1897 McClure, thus, presented a review of the Phet Buri situation as he understood it by which he lamented that Dunlap still did not see the folly of his ways. McClure wrote, "Decayed limbs must be cut off to save the life and the part of the body that is still whole." [8] Therefore, his "job" was to bring about reform and leave to God the whole question of success and numbers. If he remained faithful and continued in the direction he was going, God would one day bless his efforts by bringing a revival to Phet Buri.[9]

Such thinking thoroughly inhibited any serious consideration of change on McClure's part because he did not base his policies and actions on any measure of effectiveness other than his sense that he was doing what God wanted him to do. A colleague at Phet Buri, Altha R. Lyman, captured McClure's perspective when she compared the churches in Phet Buri to a neglected corn patch. The patch had once yielded a great harvest but the missionaries now had to weed it because the "tares" stood higher and had deeper roots than the grain. She believed that McClure's weeding of the Phet Buri church had cleansed it and the congregation would in time grow strong as a result. It would become a light of Christ for those still living in darkness.[10]

Lyman's image of the weed-infested corn patch neatly summarized McClure's view that the policies of the past had led the churches astray. It reflected his sense of his present task, namely reforming the churches. And it demonstrated his future orientation which divorced judging the results of present policies from their immediate, near-term consequences. What mattered was that at some indeterminate but absolutely certain future time those policies would be justified by great changes. Thus, McClure could go from failure to failure without having to seriously amend his methods.

McClure drew upon his understanding of "calling" for the second element of his world view which allowed him to persist in the implementation of a failed policy. That understanding reinforced his sense that he had but to pursue his attitudes and policies and wait for God to act to make them successful. He believed that he did God's work

in Phet Buri and that God had specifically appointed him, "called" him to do it. He once observed that he did not know whether his role was that of Jeremiah or Nehemiah, that is whether he would be the one to tear down or to build up. But in either case he would be doing God's work since both of those Old Testament figures were commissioned to their work by God.[11]

When Jennie Small, a co-worker at Phet Buri, died in 1891 McClure took the occasion to observe that Small was the last link between the station and the period prior to McClure's arrival. Only she had been there previously and only she among the missionaries at the station had retained some contacts with the older members who no longer associated themselves with the church. Her death, he asserted, proved that his new policies at Phet Buri were in line with God's will, implying that God removed her from the station in order to break it away from its past and push it into its future. He interpreted Small's death as a divine affirmation of his own presence in Phet Buri.[12]

His sense of responding to God's call sustained McClure in times of despair. By late 1898, for example, the discouragements of the past decade at Phet Buri had worn McClure to the point that he wondered if the Siam Mission should reappoint him there or not. He acknowledged that, humanly speaking, his work had led only to failure, but he decided that while a change might be best he should leave everything to the providence of God. As it turned out, the mission voted to return the McClures to Phet Buri. He later observed that God had kept them there even against their own choice, and he took great comfort from the biblical examples of Elijah and Jeremiah, particularly Jeremiah who worked faithfully through forty years of "unparalleled discouragement." [13]

All of which is to say that McClure firmly believed that God placed him in Phet Buri to achieve certain divine ends. This being the case, McClure reasoned, God clearly intended that he carry out his reformist "weeding" in Phet Buri, for why else would God continue to call him back there? Thus, McClure's sense of being called to do God's work coupled with his hope for the future worked in tandem to prevent him from changing his attitudes and policies in Phet Buri. He fully believed that God called him to make the church there a "clean church" and that only that goal mattered. The future was in God's hand and

God would make everything right in "that day."

The events at Phet Buri in the years after 1889 could not have unfolded as they did apart from McClure's personal belief in a better future and his personal sense of calling to work at Phet Buri. Yet McClure's persistent adherence to failed policies does not explain why the policies themselves failed. Thus we must also answer the question of why he and the Siam Mission generally failed to sustain a viable Christian communal life in Phet Buri.

That failure was the failure of a relationship. In the years after 1889 the missionary leaders of the Christian community came into conflict with the converts with the result that the converts removed themselves from the community. The church died in all but name. Why? Why did the relationship between the converts and the missionaries break down?

Stated most directly, the failed relationship between the missionaries and the converts grew out of a failure to communicate across cultural differences. Each side understood its relationship to the other differently. Each understood the meaning of church membership differently. And neither could transcend the barriers of their own perspective to comprehend the perspective of the other. Both sides turned the failure of their relationship into a moral issue and charged the other with behaving wrongly.

For their part, the Presbyterian missionaries came from an American evangelical cultural context which stressed the active involvement of local church members in their churches and viewed churches themselves as voluntary associations of like-minded individuals. American Protestantism grew out of a unique, religiously pluralistic environment in which various creeds and sects had to compete with one another for members and in which people had to choose their religious affiliation. The United States did not have a state church, and Americans did not assume that everyone in a particular community or territory would "naturally" adhere to one creed or belong to one church. American Protestants expected that people would participate in the life of their churches and have some sense of commitment to their religion. They expected people to display zeal in their religious life. The emergence of "denominations" in the United

States encouraged Protestants to see their faith primarily as an activity and as a movement to be promoted.[14]

The converts in Phet Buri, had they been told about it, would have found the logic of this perspective entirely alien and would not have understood it. McClure himself stated as much. When he and others tried to explain why the Phet Buri Station could no longer give church members temporal aid and benefits as previously, the members, he wrote, "...think it merely an arbitrary change that we have made, and so are offended, and walk no more with us." [15] The charge of arbitrariness stemmed from the fact that the converts did not share an American voluntarist understanding concerning the nature of church membership. Where the American viewpoint of McClure emphasized commitment to institutions and beliefs, the church members' Thai perspective emphasized something entirely different, the personal relationships between patrons and clients.

The converts understood conversion to mean that they accepted the missionary as their personal patron, a person to whom they gave loyalty and from whom they expected generosity. They expected a patron to help them improve their lot in life and provide them with social security in times of need. They understood that a good patron must display kindness, generosity, and compassion. The world of the members, in short, did not gravitate around institutions and creeds but around hierarchical, personal relationships.[16] Akin describes the patron-client relationship in terms of "*bun-khun*," a social value which obligates those who have received something of value from another to repay the social debt incurred. He likens *bun-khun* to the ideas of debt and reciprocity, writing, "Because *bun-khun* was like a debt, which is essentially a contract, the failure of one party to perform his part of the contract released the other party from his obligation." [17]

The converts could not help but define their own relationship to the missionaries as that of client to patron. The missionaries up to the late 1880s, after all, had consistently acted as patrons. They provided converts with financial aid; helped them escape debt-slavery; provided employment; and gave them legal and medical aid. However the missionaries understood all of this, the converts saw missionary behavior as a typical, familiar exercise in "informal patronage" [18] such as would they would expect of obviously wealthy, powerful

members of the upper class.

Thus, the matters of principle so crucial to McClure did not make any sense to the church members because they could see no cause for his concerns. And they could discover no changes in their relationship with their missionary patron which justified or even explained why he suddenly, drastically reduced the level of benefits the members received by affiliating with him. It all seemed, just as McClure wrote, arbitrary. The members, as a consequence, exercised their prerogative to withdraw from their relationship with such an informal patron, and others outside the church refused to become clients to a patron who lacked compassion.

This central difference of understanding regarding the meaning of church membership led each side to charge that the other lacked sincerity in its communal Christian commitments. The missionaries believed the converts lacked sincerity in their conversion because all they wanted was personal benefits. The converts believed the reformist missionaries lacked sincerity because they did not act in a benevolent manner befitting a sincere patron. Viewed from a Thai perspective, the whole question of patronage and the patron-client social relationship suffused the events in Phet Buri with Thai cultural expectations and assumptions. Viewed from an American evangelical perspective, the whole question of commitment to faith and church suffused the events in Phet Buri with American cultural expectations and assumptions. Phet Buri cannot be understood apart from either set of expectations and assumptions.

The missionaries, to put all of this in other terms, looked upon church membership as a *covenantal relationship* [19] by which the converts committed themselves to the Christian faith and the church. This commitment grew out of a personal religious experience which led one to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to use the missionaries' own terms. The outstanding nineteenth-century Thai model of a proper conversion was Nan Inta, the first baptized convert in northern Thailand—baptized in 1869. Nan Inta gave the Christian faith a long, close scrutiny before he accepted it as the true system of religious belief; and when he converted he did so knowing he risked political persecution. Nan Inta was, furthermore, a man of some social standing who did not need Christianity for personal gain, but who achieved a

"saving knowledge of Jesus" through his study of the Bible. While Nan Inta may not have conceptualized his conversion as a covenant with God and the church, his conversion appeared to be such to the missionaries.[20]

The Phet Buri converts did not understand the Christian concept of a "covenant" and they did not conceive of their conversion as an essentially religious act, although it had religious implications since they changed their religion as a part of their conversion. Conversion meant for them a *social* contract, by which they undertook certain contractual obligations and expected the other contracting party, the missionary, to adhere to that party's obligations to them. Each party mutually benefitted from the relationship.

This fundamental difference in perspective led to a different understanding of the role of the missionaries themselves. McClure and his colleagues, on the one hand, saw themselves as essentially religious figures called by God to spread the Christian religion in Thailand. Based upon their own culture's understanding of the relationship between the sacred and the temporal worlds, the converts, however, viewed the missionary role quite differently. Jasper Ingersoll has noted that in central Thai society Buddhist priests have high status, which they attain by withdrawing from the normal ambitions and gratifications of society. People express that high status by addressing priests with special titles, through the use of a special vocabulary with priests, and by various postures of deference. Ingersoll writes,

The high status of the priest is different from the high status of any layman. Although an active head priest may exert influence in a great many ways, his high status consists in part of his conformity to role norms that preclude his attainment of status and influence in a secular manner. A priest's status is high in the social hierarchy but somewhat outside it.[21]

Traditional Thai religious functionaries, in other words, had a special place in local social hierarchies. That special place clearly distinguished them from the laity who would not seek a typical patron-client relationship with them. Akin further emphasizes the separateness of the "sacred world" of the Buddhist priest from ordinary life by noting

that becoming a monk radically altered one's relationships of inferiority and superiority.[22]

In the eyes of the converts, the missionaries appeared to be something very different from religious figures. Unlike the Buddhist clergy, the missionaries, including the ordained clergymen, involved themselves in the secular world. They dealt with money. They maintained close physical and social contact with members of the opposite sex. They did not depend upon the laity for their daily food nor did they depend upon the material services of the laity. They lived, in sum, very much in the lay world as lay people lived in it according to a traditional Buddhist way of looking at such things.

The missionaries themselves contributed to this misunderstanding of their role because they refused to accept the Thai understanding of the relationship of the sacred sphere to the temporal order. They declined to cut themselves off from the temporal order, and they rejected the ways in which Buddhist monks seemed to passively withdraw from the world.[23] To their activist thinking that withdrawal would have amounted to an abandonment of their God-given duty to convert the world to Christ and to reform the world. The Buddhist understanding of the priesthood, as the missionaries viewed it, also contradicted the Protestant ideal of the "priesthood of all believers," the idea that all Christians have "liberty of access to God through Christ." [24] According to this view, the ordained clergy have a particular calling, but not one that places them in a separate sacred sphere. The Presbyterian system, in fact, provides an order of ordination for lay people as well, that of "ruling elders."

The missionaries, in other words, made a point of distinguishing themselves from the Thai Buddhist conception of ordination and the priesthood. They engaged in trading and selling not only to obtain goods needed for their work and living but also to teach the converts that such activities were compatible with the Christian religion. They wanted the converts to learn this lesson precisely because the Buddhist monks did not engage in such pursuits and took a passive attitude towards the world.[25] The missionaries intended by all of this to redefine the relationship of religious figures to the larger world. In actual practice their actions defined them in a way very much different from what they intended. They wanted Thai society to learn

that religious leaders could engage in "worldly" pursuits. What they accomplished was to convince Thai society they were not religious figures.

The Protestant missionaries, thus, stood in stark contrast to the Buddhist priest. They did not live nor act like religious figures. And the members of the Phet Buri churches related to the missionaries as if the missionaries were lay patrons whose status depended on "normal" factors, such as wealth, education, and political influence. They did not, as far as we know, address the missionaries with a special vocabulary nor show them a special deference like that accorded to priests. The church members expected social and financial advantages from their relationship with the missionaries, advantages they would not have expected from relationships with priests. Wachter underscored the fact that the converts related to the missionaries as lay patrons rather than religious figures when he complained that the Buddhists always took offerings to their worship, but when they became Christians they only expected to get rather than give.[26] They didn't take offerings because they did not see themselves dealing with the sacred sphere in their relationship to the missionaries.

Other historical evidence lends further weight to the impression that the converts and Thai society generally looked upon the missionaries as nothing more (or less) than lay patrons. In the context of criticizing the teachings of the Protestant missionaries, for example, King Mongkut observed in the early 1860s that all the various peoples in Thailand held that ordained priests could not have wives, and only celibate priests were truly religious. The people also understood that all married men made their living as lay people normally did.[27] In Mongkut's mind, then, celibacy both symbolized and incorporated the fundamental difference between the religious and the lay spheres. He implied that the missionaries fell within the lay sphere.

The Catholic Bishop Pallegoix, though hardly a neutral source given the enmity between Catholic and Protestant missionaries, once reported that the Thai people found it impossible to accept married men as priests and thus only called the Protestant missionaries *kru* (teacher) or *mo* (doctor).[28] In late 1843 while on a missionary tour, the Rev. William Buell, a Presbyterian missionary, met with a group of priests in a village near Phet Buri who asked if a Protestant

minister could be married. Buell replied they could. While he records no response or reaction on the part of the priests, clearly the issue of clerical celibacy with respect to the missionaries' religious status was on their minds[29]

Taken in sum, the events in Phet Buri grew out of a profound difference in understanding of the missionary role between the missionaries and the converts. The missionaries saw themselves as essentially religious leaders bringing a religious message to Thailand, but they did not believe that they lived in a separate sacred sphere set apart for religious functionaries. They did believe that, by the grace of God, they lived within God's sphere of the "saved," a sphere that included all true Christians.[30] They called upon the people of Thailand to convert to Christianity as a matter of principle and a matter of religious faith so that they too could experience salvation. In the converts' eyes, however, the missionaries acted like wealthy, influential patrons, and conversion amounted to an obligation one undertook as a part of accepting missionary patronage.

When the reform missionaries accused the converts of insincerity in their conversion and the converts accused the missionaries of breaking their patron-client contract, each side was perfectly correct in its accusation—from its own cultural and religious perspective. The problem was that both sides lacked a conception of cultural relativity which would have allowed them to empathize with the other and would have encouraged them to try to communicate across the barriers of cultural presuppositions. As far as we can tell, the converts simply assumed that their culture's traditional understanding of the priesthood was the only understanding possible. It was the only one they knew. Their cognitive world had no place for essentially religious leaders that combined priestly functions with those of a patron.

The missionaries also lacked the concept of cultural relativity.[31] They believed that only Christianity possessed meaningful religious truth, and therefore their concept of ministry was necessarily correct. They understood something of the Buddhist idea of ordination, but they could not accept that they might learn anything from it. They could not understand why Christian converts would cling to it. In one sense, then the cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding which took place in Phet Buri was inevitable. Neither side

could bridge the cultural gap between them, particularly since they did not even realize the gap existed.

It is not correct to say, however, that *no way* existed to bridge the cultural chasm between missionary and convert, because Dunlap did bridge that gap. He conducted a relatively successful evangelistic program that brought into the Phet Buri churches far more converts than any other missionary ever "won." At the same time, he led those churches ably to the extent that some of his colleagues sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. He even convinced the Phet Buri churches to give, as we saw earlier, to causes beyond themselves such as assisting converts in other places build chapels. Another one of the key questions of the Phet Buri case, then, pertains to how Dunlap spanned the gulf of cultural differences the reform missionaries could not bridge.

We cannot attribute his success to theological differences as such. Dunlap expressed an entirely orthodox, conservative Presbyterian theology, and no one ever accused him of being anything other than a good Old School Presbyterian. His writings reveal a theology entirely in line with the thinking of the other missionaries in Thailand.

The answer to the question of Dunlap's success lies primarily in his personality, including the ways in which he acted out his religious beliefs. Dunlap had a winning personality. People liked him. One has the distinct impression that he could have been a successful leader in almost any situation and in almost any cultural setting because his dynamic, friendly, and sympathetic personality attracted people to him. He coupled this winning personality with a strong emphasis on love and sacrifice for the other. The converts felt that he loved them and they felt that he took care of them. Smith puts it this way,

Dunlap had been a most personable man, easily gained the confidence of the Siamese, and freely utilized a patron role among them. He was their friend, counsellor, advocate, and champion. His house was always crowded with people. They loved him, trusted him, and highly respected his advice.[32]

Whether consciously or not, Dunlap met the expectations the converts

had of a good patron. His personality and his religious priorities made him appear to be a beneficent patron and also won him the friendship of the powerful governing class, which friendship only enhanced his potential value as a patron.

Dunlap's personality and the manner in which he expressed his religious convictions allowed him to function effectively within the Thai social context. He used his secular status as a patron to good advantage for his religious goals. And here we must emphasize the element of personality including the expression of religious convictions. The reform missionary leaders in Phet Buri, Thompson and McClure, did not have personalities that would "naturally" attract converts to them, and they generally expressed their religious concerns in terms of discipline and adherence to principles. Thompson was a hard-nosed pessimist who projected a courageous but contentious, harsh personality.[33] McClure was a relatively timid, self-doubting man who appeared more withdrawn and unkind than he really intended to be. It is hard to imagine either of these men enjoying under any circumstances the degree of success that Dunlap enjoyed.

Thus personalities did play an important part in the events at Phet Buri. Had the reform party projected the loving image of a Dunlap they most likely would have enjoyed greater evangelistic and pastoral success than they did. But that is just the point: men such as Thompson and McClure could not project such an image. They didn't have the personalities for it, nor did they express their personal faith in the way Dunlap expressed his.

Yet we should not put too much weight on the factor of personality. Questions of belief and ideology remained dominant to the way in which events actually took place in Phet Buri. The young reformers could not accept the validity of the patron role model because it violated their cultural sensitivities and because they could not understand the viewpoint of the members of the churches. They did not distinguish between a patron-client relationship based on both mutual respect and advantage from one based on greed and selfishness. Thus, they could not accept as valid the evangelistic and pastoral results of Dunlap's work. All they could see was that Dunlap encouraged what we today would call "rice Christianity" and did not exercise proper discipline over the church. They failed to see that Dunlap

accomplished things with the converts no other missionary achieved. They focused only on the fact that his work created what they might have called an "unclean" church. McClure, for example, acknowledged that Dunlap was a deeply committed missionary who gave himself sacrificially to his work, but asserted that "...all except [Dunlap] see that he made a most serious mistake in the policy that he allowed himself to pursue while in charge of this field." [34]

Had McClure continued to dispense the "temporal advantages" given out by Dunlap and the other "old" missionaries, would things have been any different? One can only speculate, but we should remember that the church members' major complaint against McClure was that he did not give them the help they had received in the past. It seems likely that if McClure had shared Dunlap's beneficent inclinations the churches would have remained intact. One could hardly suppose that the less-than-competent McClure could have kept them as active as Dunlap, yet it is unlikely the churches would have died away as they actually did. They had already survived other periods of difficult missionary leadership. Which is to say that while McClure's personality compounded the problems he faced at Phet Buri, it was his policies and ideological attitudes that caused those problems.

In sum, three central factors stand out in an analysis of the rise and fall of the Phet Buri churches between 1880 and 1900. First of all, McClure persisted in applying the principles of the young reform party to the situation at Phet Buri in spite of the fact that even he could see that by any usual measure those principles failed to attain the evangelistic and ecclesiastical ends he himself sought. McClure refused to change his methods of operation at Phet Buri because he believed that God called him to act as he did and that God would one day bring success to his efforts if only he remained faithful to the reform principles.

The second key factor at Phet Buri was the cultural miscommunication between missionaries and converts. Each understood the meaning of conversion and church membership from their own cultural and religious heritage. Each defined their relationship to the other from that same frame of reference. The missionaries believed in a voluntaristic church and in a clergy overtly involved in the world. The converts placed the church within the framework of their patron-client society

and accepted the missionaries as patrons rather than as essentially religious figures. Neither side understood the other.

The difference in personalities between Dunlap and the representatives of the reform party formed a third key factor, although this factor must be seen as somewhat secondary to the first two. The factor of personality and the expression of religious beliefs in action helps to explain why Dunlap succeeded where others failed, but it does not explain why those others rejected his success as actual failure. For that explanation, we must return to the influence of religious beliefs and of culture.



CHAPTER FIVE

The events in Phet Buri at the end of the nineteenth century hold a certain fascination for those of us who work in the contemporary church in Thailand. Those events have had a direct influence (yet to be studied) upon the size and nature of the church in central and southern Thailand down to the present. Beyond this direct impact, furthermore, lay intriguing questions regarding the Christian presence in Thailand. It is difficult to see how the contemporary Thai church can seriously respond to its present situation and needs without taking into consideration the impact and the meaning of the Phet Buri case as we have described it here.

The Phet Buri case, in the first place, highlights the important role of the so-called "reform party" in Thai church history. A more detailed and comprehensive history of the Siam Mission's work in central and southern Thailand will almost certainly demonstrate that the young reformers of the 1880s and 1890s had a major impact on the emergence of a viable Christian movement in those regions. Their single-minded insistence that the Thai church must be a clean church came at a critical time in the history of the church, and deterred the possibility of a large, active, viable Christian movement for decades.

A brief divergence into the history of the Siam Mission's sister Presbyterian mission in the North, the Laos Mission, will help explicate the role of the reform party in the Siam Mission. Founded by the McGilvarys in 1867 as a separate mission, the Laos Mission followed a rocky course until the late 1870s when both it and the Siam Mission experienced a sudden burst of numerical growth and public interest in the Christian religion. That growth took place in Phet Buri during the transition period at the end of the McFarland era (1878) when Dunlap took over leadership of the Station. A similar period of growth took place in Bangkok and in the outlying regions of the city of Chiang Mai. In the North, this era of growth provided a spring board for still further numerical and territorial expansion capped, after 1910, by a final burst of conversions numbering in the thousands. But in the Siam Mission, the "revival" of the late 1870s did not lead to a large

growth in church membership. The reformist drive for a clean church, as documented in the preceding chapters with regard to Phet Buri, squelched the possibility of growth.

The historian initially feels almost helpless to account for the difference. Dunlap's work, as well as that of other missionaries in Phet Buri, indicates that a potential for growth existed in the central Thai churches just as much as it did in the northern Thai churches. Nor do cultural or political factors provide a rationale for the differences. Dunlap's success throws into doubt the contention that central Thai Buddhism was in some inexplicable way stronger or more resistant to Christian evangelism. Dunlap had no trouble attracting converts in the hundreds.

Some have theorized that the Bangkok government threw up more effective obstacles to conversion than did the weaker princely governments in northern Thailand. The northern Christian community in fact, however, suffered much more overt persecution than did its southern counterpart, and it was central Thai officials who helped protect the converts. And again, if the government acted so effectively, why did Dunlap—the friend of royalty and officialdom—achieve his success?

Demographic and theological differences among the missionaries, furthermore, do not account for the distinction between the two missions. The members of both missions came out of the same denominational and cultural background in the United States, and they all adhered to the conservative tenets of the "Princeton Theology," which dominated the Presbyterian Church at that time. Perhaps a close comparative historical study of the two missions might isolate a particular set of factors that accounts for the difference.

In the absence of such a study, we must fix our attention upon one clear, obvious difference between the two missions. During the decade of the 1880s when the Laos Mission, under the McGilvarys' continuing leadership, expanded in a number of ways; the Siam Mission lost all of its senior, experienced missionaries. A crop of younger, inexperienced missionaries took over. And they treated the converts and convert churches in a way different from the treatment which the northern missionaries accorded their churches. The Siam Mission missionaries treated the converts less tolerantly and more

critically. They showed less patience and tended to take strong disciplinary measures. Although the members of both missions frequently displayed a similar *attitude* towards the converts (indeed, the title for this book is taken from J. L. Hartzell of the Laos Mission), there existed a detectable difference in the way in which they expressed their attitude.

Edna Cole, a missionary teacher in Chiang Mai, captured something of the sense of the Laos Mission's feelings about the converts in a letter to the Board which she wrote in 1883. She found hope in the fact that people converted at all, and argued that the missionaries had to accept the converts because of the social sacrifices they made by converting, that is by virtually withdrawing from the society around them when they entered the church. Yet, she lamented, these same converts were "still dead" because they did not understand the sacrifice Christ made for them.[1] That is to say, the converts did not really understand the meaning of Christian faith for their lives. Cole's attitude distinguished her from the Siam Mission reformers in one particular only: she *accepted* the converts as Christians even though she questioned the depth of their Christian understanding.[2]

The Rev. William Clifton Dodd, writing in 1896, stated that he firmly believed that the northern Thai could establish self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches. He wrote,

All that some of the gloomy brethren say about the Laos churches would apply to almost any converts from generations of heathenism. To me it is a constant source of wonder and thanksgiving that in the midst of heathenish customs, in spite of heathen relations, heathen training, and heathen ancestry and consequent heathen predisposition, the vast majority of the converts are so nearly perfect men and women in Jesus Christ.[3]

In spite of these sentiments, Dodd was one of the more conservative members of the Laos Mission. He found it difficult in actual fact to allow northern Thai converts a large role in running their own churches.[4] His approach to the converts, even so, did not include the harsh judgmentalism prevalent among the Siam reformers.

The Rev. Hugh Taylor, also from the North, found occasion to comment directly on the events in Phet Buri which we have studied here, and in his observations he addressed the question of accepting conversions for reasons of temporal aid. Taylor overtly sided with the reform party's view of events in Phet Buri, but he concluded his comments with the following observation:

I would not drive off a man who came to me seeking financial advantage. But there is a difference between a seeker and a sucker. A seeker, though he is led by a mercenary motive and thereby comes under the influence of the Gospel message, may be converted...But a sucker, enticed by a bait thrown at him, nibbles at the bait and does off with it, leaving the hook.[5]

Taylor did not seem to realize that the reform party missionaries in the Siam Mission did not make his folksy distinction between seekers and suckers. To them, virtually *all* of the converts were suckers.

Cole, who later became a missionary in Bangkok, Dodd, and Taylor represented a more moderate view concerning accepting conversions from mixed motives. They acknowledged that the very act of conversion, for whatever reasons, had meaning in and of itself because it meant breaking many of one's ties with every day Thai society. They could even accept an overtly self-seeking conversion if it showed any hope at all of eventually leading to a "truer" conversion. They might not have disagreed at all with the Siam Mission reformers regarding the purity of the church in theory; but their more accepting attitude shows that in practice they did not adopt the reformers' radical measures to achieve that purity.

The Phet Buri Case, in sum, offers insights into why the ethnic Thai church remained small and geographically confined in central Thailand at a time when the northern Thai church was growing in numbers and expanding geographically. The evidence as we have it before us suggests that the rather mundane factor of missionary factionalism, based at least partly upon age and experience, led to the differences in size and extent of the churches founded by the two missions. The fact that the "reform" faction came out on top over the

moderate position of missionaries such as Dunlap led to policies intended to keep converts of impure motives out of the church. A cynic might observe that they did indeed succeed in that purpose—they succeeded by making conversion so unpalatable that *no one* wanted to become a Christian. In any event, the events of the Phet Buri Case provide us information on a critical period in the history of central Thai Protestantism and offer the tantalizing suggestion that the smallness of the church there had as much to do with Siam Mission politics as with anything else.

Which is to say, the image of the "clean church" and its radical concern for the purity of the convert church played a pivotal role in central Thai church history. Viewed from the perspective of a century later, it is difficult to see that role in a positive light, perhaps because the reformers' emphasis on purity manifested itself in generally negative ways. The reformers' consistently took a negative view of the converts and their churches. They fixed their attention on what they found unacceptable, and tended towards a blanket condemnation of the converts.

Even on the face of it, the reformers' intense negativism seems hardly credible. Is it possible that nearly all of the converts were so entirely selfish and immoral as the reformers' stated? Did they really deserve the appellation of "heathen Christians," the term Dr. Thompson applied to the converts at Phet Buri? The extreme position of the reformers impresses one, quite apart from other historical evidence, as precisely that: an extreme position.

The evidence of their moderate colleagues on the field suggests that the reform party did in fact overstate and greatly exaggerate the situation they faced in their work with the convert churches. Examples from missionary writings demonstrate that the converts suffered for their conversion, that they could act selflessly on occasion, and that some of them demonstrated an impressive Christian faith. S. G. McFarland, for example, told the story of "a band of rowdies" who confronted a Phet Buri convert on his way home one night in 1877 and, upon learning he had just been to a Christian meeting, beat him for that reason alone. In the following year, the Rev. N. A. McDonald in Bangkok noted that recent converts demonstrated a willingness to

actively participate in the church and to contribute liberally to its work. Some nearly tithed to support a Thai evangelist. In 1882 Dr. E. A. Sturge praised Kru Kaan, one of the Phet Buri Church elders, for his faithful discharge of his duties over a period of many years. Sturge observed that Kru Kaan's life showed the power of the gospel "to change this people." [6]

Dunlap himself related a number of instances in which converts displayed a definite religious concern that could not be simply explained away as a desire to advance themselves socially and materially. One convert told Dunlap that he had received a tract from Dr. Bradley many years before and that from the time he first read the tract he stopped believing in Buddhism. Another stated publicly that he had actively resisted converting to Christianity for a long period after he first heard about it, but all the while he found no peace in Buddhism. This man avowed that it was the Holy Spirit who finally showed him he had no merit of his own and had to depend upon Christ's infinite merit. Dunlap reported how still another convert, a young man, on his own initiative started a prayer group at his home and then invited Dunlap to take part. [7]

The Rev. James W. Van Dyke, a seasoned missionary who served in both Phet Buri and Bangkok before his retirement to the United States due to illness in 1886, stated the moderates' position concerning the converts. In an 1888 letter written on behalf of the Board of Foreign Missions in response to a highly critical letter the Board received from a Presbyterian who had visited Bangkok, Van Dyke readily admitted that the converts were not everything the missionaries would have them be. He argued, however, that they faced great temptations from the society around them, and that even so they behaved better than most of the so-called "Christians" from Europe and America who lived in Bangkok. Van Dyke went on to explain that just as in the United States so in Thailand not all of the Christians were perfect, but there were many whose "devotion, consecration and willingness to make self-denial for religion and principles" compared favorably with American Christians. [8]

Van Dyke presented what the reformers did not present: a balanced view of the converts which did not put them into an entirely negative or an entirely positive light. He saw them as a group of indi-

viduals who responded to the Christian message in different ways with different degrees of commitment and understanding. Taken along with the evidence of veteran missionaries, Van Dyke's statement provides a credible description of the converts. The reformers' often emotional descriptions of the converts' selfishness and lack of moral strength lack that credibility. They did not base their opinions on the reality of the churches they worked with—or, rather, their descriptions amounted to only a caricature of the actual situation. Or, perhaps the most precise statement we can make about the reformers' descriptions is that they fixed their attention on one aspect of the reality of the convert churches. They took that aspect to be the essential character of the Thai churches under their leadership.

Such observations suggest that Dunlap's patronizing leadership did not lead to the corruption of the converts. It lead, rather, to the creation of relatively large, relatively active Christian communities much like those found anywhere else in the world. These observations also suggest that people who convert in the context of patron-client relationships are not necessarily corrupt or corrupted thereby. The evidence taken from a Van Dyke or a Dunlap indicates that Thai society "produced" people of deep Christian faith at about the same rate as American society.

The reformers' intense negativism regarding the converts' motivations and subsequent behavior after conversion had two specific consequences in Phet Buri that deserve mention here. In the first place, their attitude precluded the reformers from appropriating Thai socio-cultural forms and norms for the life of the church. They rejected out of hand the idea that in a patron-client *society* the church must be a patron-client *church*. They tried, instead, to reproduce the attitudes and the values of American Presbyterianism in Thailand because they assumed without need of forethought that the true church of Jesus Christ in nineteenth-century Thailand must approximate in its form, theology, values, and behavior the American Presbyterian Church.

Philip Hughes' study of Christian values in northern Thailand concludes that cultural patterns of belief cannot be easily discarded and must be taken seriously when formulating Christian beliefs. He writes, "In each culture, Christians should work out their beliefs anew in

relation to the beliefs held in that culture." [9] Hughes' research indicates that northern Thai culture quietly, but effectively assimilated Christian values in spite of missionary efforts to retain a "pure faith" in the church.

The events in Phet Buri suggest that we should extend Hughes' dictum concerning working out Christian beliefs anew in every culture to include a rethinking of the nature of Christian community as well. The advocates of radical reform failed to understand a key point which many of their predecessors had understood, perhaps only intuitively—but still understood. That point is that cultural patterns of social relationships and behavior cannot be discarded any more easily than can patterns of belief and values. It made no difference whatsoever that the reformers did not like the way Thai society structured relationships. The converts they worked with had grown up in that social structure and knew no other. As we have seen, they quite naturally put the missionaries in the role of patron because the missionaries fit that role.

Here we must emphasize the contrast between the "moderates" and the "reformers" response to the cultural realities of the Phet Buri churches. Under moderate leadership the Phet Buri churches grew even in the face of adverse circumstances. If we harken back to the period when the Siam Mission had no men to lead the Phet Buri Station and had to entrust the station to two women missionaries, we will remember that some male converts objected and that considerable difficulty arose. Yet the church continued to grow and be viable. It also continued to grow under the sympathetic leadership of McCauley, a new missionary who couldn't even speak Thai, in the brief period he led the Station before he became ill and had to leave Thailand. The historian cannot write off Dunlap's success at Phet Buri as simply an aberration resulting from his dynamic, winsome personal style. Dunlap represented the epitome of the possible, a snapshot of what might have been given capable leadership and a less judgmental attitude regarding Thai society and the motivations of the converts. Other moderate missionaries also enjoyed modest success in Phet Buri.

The lesson is a simple one. A viable Thai church must be a Thai church in its social structures as well as its cultural norms. The data from Phet Buri indicates that during vital periods in the history of

the church there Thai culture assimilated the social and organizational structures of the church. When the Phet Buri Station refused to comply with the requirements and strictures of patron-client relationships the churches died. It was inevitable that the Phet Buri churches would either be Thai churches or die. They died.

Westerners working with the Thai churches today still often feel uneasy with the demands of a patron-client social structure, even the informal structure of the present. A few will argue forthrightly that patron-client relationships are wrong and, perhaps, even a denial of the gospel. Many more will try to tolerate "the system" but feel that they personally do not want to get too involved in that system—they do not want to play the role of the "sugar daddy."

Such feelings have caused Western colleagues of the Thai church and the church itself to largely ignore the theological and ecclesiological questions related to patron-client social structures within the church. In what ways does the Thai Christian community continue to embody patron-client relationships? What does it mean to be a patron and a client within the context of the church? How do we reconcile the role of patron with Christ's call to servanthood? How do we reconcile the role of client to the idea of Christian freedom? What roles does a pastor play in a patron-client social system, and what particular, specific skills are required to fulfill those roles? These are significant questions, but one looks in vain for much serious reflection upon them.

The case of the Phet Buri churches demonstrates that cultural issues do not stop at the superficial level of using more Thai hymns or more Thai-like Christian worship forms. The profoundly difficult issue of the indigenization and contextualization of the Christian faith poses questions about the very nature of social relationships within the church. It raises questions about what it means to "lead" and to "follow" in the church within the context and parameters of Thai society.

We turn now to another consequence of the reformers' intense negativism. Their attitude about the converts' motivations and subsequent behavior after conversion made it difficult for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the uneducated elements of Thai society to convert to Christianity. The reformers never overtly stated that they didn't want

such people in the church. Yet, the evidence presented in this case study suggests that they only wanted articulate, spiritually mature, well thought out conversions. They rejected out of hand conversions that might include any element of self-interest. Realistically, they could expect such conversions only from people with a degree of education and with sufficient social standing to preclude charges of self interest in conversion. A few poorer people might have satisfied these expectations, but they could hardly be the rule.

The reformer party led by Wachter, Thompson, and McClure, in essence, limited salvation and redemption to a purely "religious" plane which precluded social and economic factors. They rejected the belief of Dunlap and other moderates that missionaries performed a Christian act when they helped individuals escape debt slavery or helped them gain justice in the corrupt legal system of the day. The reformers saw in these cases only the possibility of corrupted converts. They saw only the "problem of temporal aid." Again, by these attitudes, the reform party limited conversion to people who do not face the daily problems of poverty and judicial injustice, problems that dominated the lives of those who experience them.

This narrow understanding of conversion blinded the reformers to a crucial point that should have caused them to moderate their demands for "pure" conversions and "clean" churches. Christianity in nineteenth-century Thailand seldom attracted people of social status. As far as we can tell from the historical record, the converts in the Phet Buri churches did not accept the Christian religion for "purely religious" reasons alone. Some did seem to the missionaries to convert for largely religious reasons, but most did not. The majority of converts sought a better life, and they saw in the missionaries the means to attain that life. We may surmise that they were, to one degree or another, "marginalized" people who had less to lose by giving up their traditional religion than they had to gain by accepting missionary patronage. The charge that Dunlap attracted converts by promises of helping debt slaves and those with legal problems and his rebuttal that he merely tried to help those in need lends weight to the assumption that the converts were people at the bottom rather than at the top of society. Evidence from the churches in northern Thailand lends still more weight to this assumption since the bulk of converts in the North were

marginalized people—those accused of demon possession, the ill, the poor, and lepers.[10]

Historians of American Presbyterianism will realize immediately that the reform party merely reflected their own heritage in their implicit rejection of marginal peoples. From late American colonial times (the later eighteenth century), the conservative wing of the Presbyterian Church directed its evangelistic efforts primarily at the educated, prosperous, professional classes. The Presbyterian Church believed itself to have a particular mission to Christianize the elite classes, and on the western frontier Presbyterian missionaries generally sought out the middle and upper classes, the leading classes of society, for membership in Presbyterian churches. Presbyterian missionaries and clergy did not show much sympathy with the folk Christianity of less educated frontier people, and as a consequence frontier people generally rejected Presbyterianism for the more populist Methodist and Baptist denominations.[11]

The reformers' attitudes and actions in Phet Buri do call to mind the attitudes of Presbyterian missionaries and clerics in the United States. But there was, of course, a problem in Phet Buri that Presbyterian missionaries on the American frontier did not face. In the United States, Presbyterianism formed numerous churches from its middle and upper class constituency, but in Thailand the upper class had every reason to reject conversion. Conversion meant giving up too much of one's cultural identity for it to appeal to the wealthy and the powerful. And there was no middle class to speak of. In other words, the reform missionaries' attitudes deprived them of a constituency to convert. They did not see salvation and redemption as having economic and social relevance. They did not accept the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged as valid reasons for conversion. Thus, they did not see the gospel they preached as good news for the poor. And there was no one else to convert.

Taken together the reformers' explicit rejection of Thai cultural and social forms and their implicit rejection of marginal people severely limited the possibilities of creating a viable Christian community in Phet Buri. They did not preach a message of good news to the poor. They did not project a benevolent, generous attitude. They should not have been surprised that virtually the only people who

converted were those in their employ.

The reformers' intensely negative attitudes towards Thai social forms and towards the Thai converts led, almost automatically, to their reliance on discipline to try to create clean churches in Phet Buri. McClure himself made the link between his negativism and the employment of discipline explicit in two letters written in mid-1899. In the first letter, McClure justified the need for strict discipline in dealing with the Phet Buri churches by stating, "These people are so weak and childlike that they can hardly be dealt with as we would deal with men at home." He complained that his predecessors had not taken the weakness and childishness of the people into account and had dealt with the converts far too leniently. In the second letter, McClure complained that Dunlap had been much too confident in and optimistic about the converts in his dealings with them.[12]

Note the line of reasoning: the people in Phet Buri were weak and childlike. They, therefore, required strict discipline. Dunlap and other moderates had failed to perceive the converts' weaknesses. They had, therefore, failed to discipline the converts properly. We have here again radical, sweeping statements that do not take into account individuals nor even appear to reflect the reality of who the converts were. McClure categorized *all* converts as weak and childlike. In consequence, they must be disciplined. This emphasis on discipline created a judicial atmosphere in the Phet Buri churches, an atmosphere that reinforced the radical missionaries failure to provide proper, helpful patronage for church members. The negative attitude of the missionaries towards Thai society and culture manifested itself in their relationship to the converts; and since the missionaries led the churches, it manifested itself in the very life of the churches themselves.

Given all of this, it would be easy to compose an extended essay condemning "the missionaries" for their spiteful, ugly ethnocentrism. It would even be fair to write such an essay, for when we come down to it the young reformers displayed a heedless cultural insensitivity and social elitism, even for their own era. The point I want to make in this case study, however, is not that "the missionaries" who worked in Phet Buri and in the Siam Mission at the end of the nine-

teenth century were evil ogres but rather that actions taken by individual missionaries and by a particular party of missionaries have had serious negative consequences for the church.

The historian can go no further than to say that the ethnocentrism and elitism of the reformers limited the spread of Protestantism in Phet Buri and in central/southern Siam. As a Christian historian, I would like to recast that conclusion in the language of the church itself. That is to say, the ethnocentrism of the young reform party of the Siam Mission seriously crippled the Christian church's ability to witness to the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit in Thailand.

efforts to "win" them, Robert F. Berthelot reached the following conclusion: "The laborers in the Lord's vineyard were doomed not to reap the harvest they hoped because . . . and the persistence of aboriginal culture . . ."



CONCLUSION

Historians constantly face the problem of where to begin and where to end. History tells the story of peoples and groups and, as such, finds it difficult to pinpoint precisely when a story begins and when it ends. In the particular case of Phet Buri, one has an image of two great historical streams—one Asian and Buddhist, the other Western and Christian—flowing together briefly in the lives of the converts and missionaries in that city. One cannot finally understand those events apart from the whole stream of central Thai history, its struggle to withstand colonialism, its resurrection after the fall of Ayudhya, and so on. Nor can one fully understand those events apart from the American and the American Presbyterian social and religious experience, an experience that draws one back to England, Scotland, Geneva, and even further back to Rome and Jerusalem. That is a bit much for a book of this size. But those two great streams still existed, and we must take into account the importance they had for the people involved in the events in Phet Buri. The local people of that community lived within a cognitive, social and cultural world which made perfect sense to them. The missionaries who moved into Phet Buri brought with them a cognitive, social and cultural world which made equally good sense to them.

We must finally attribute the spasms of success and failure, growth and decline in Phet Buri to the ways in which the missionaries either bridged or failed to bridge the cultural gap between themselves and the converts created by those two vast streams. In the final analysis, the question of why Protestantism attracted so few adherents and failed to plant lively local congregations in Phet Buri returns us to those two cultural streams including their diverse religious traditions. Local church life all but died in Phet Buri because the missionaries who succeeded Dunlap rejected locating the church's sociocultural life in the Thai stream and sought to draw the converts into a church centered socially, organizationally, and culturally on American Protestantism.

In his reflection upon the question of Protestantism's failure to convert significant numbers of American Indians in spite of intense

efforts to "win" them, Robert F. Berkhofer reached the following conclusion: "The laborers in the Lord's vineyard were doomed not to reap the harvest they hoped because of their own cultural assumptions...and the persistence of aboriginal culture." [1] Berkhofer's observation provides a cogent conclusion for Phet Buri as well. Through all of the vagaries of personalities and happenstance, the Presbyterian missionaries failed to "reap the harvest they hoped" because the reform party assumed their cultural values and truths were universal and therefore they had to conform the converts to their perception of reality. They tried to remove the converts from their culture. And they failed because their theological and ideological search for a church purified of Thai culture failed to take into account the persistence of that culture.



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NOTES

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- [1] "The Introduction of Christianity into Thai Society: The Phet Buri Case," in *Christianity - Missionaries - Thai Society*, ed. Herbert R. Swanson and Prasit Pongudom (Chiang Mai: Office of History, Church of Christ in Thailand, 1990). in Thai.

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- [1] Hartzell, "The Lakawn City Church," *Laos News* 14, 2 (May 1917): 66. Italics added.
- [2] William C. Placher, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 64-65, 113-114.
- [3] See Ernest G. Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1985). American historians have devoted a great deal of attention to the theme of the Protestant drive for social reform. The literature is too extensive to cite here, but for the Presbyterian tradition in particular see Fred J. Hood, *Reformed America: The Middle and Southern States, 1783-1837* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1980).
- [4] See Maen Pongudom, "Apologetic and Missionary Proclamation: Exemplified by American Presbyterian Missionaries to Thailand (1828-1978), Early Church Apologists: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and the Venerable Buddhadasa Bikkhu, a Thai Buddhist Monk-Apologist" (Ph.D. diss., University of Otago, 1979); Alex G. Smith, *Siamese Gold: A History of Church Growth in Thailand* (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan, 1982); Philip J. Hughes, *Proclamation and Response: A Study of the History of the Christian Faith in*

Northern Thailand (Chiang Mai: Payap College Manuscript Division, 1982); Herbert R. Swanson, "This Heathen People: The Cognitive Sources of American Missionary Westernizing Activities in Northern Siam, 1867-1889" (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1987); and Swanson, *Khrischak Muang Nua: A Study in Northern Thai Church History* (Bangkok: Chuan Press, 1984).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

[1] Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 105, gives the Phet Buri Church 28 members in 1875 and 98 in 1880.

[2] M. L. Cort, "Report of Petchaburi Mission Station For the Year ending Sept. 30th 1879, v. 4, Records of the Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (**hereafter cited as BFM**).

[3] Cort to Lowrie, 24 November 1879, v. 4, BFM.

[4] Cort to Lowrie, 6 April 1880, v.4, BFM; S. M. Coffman to Lowrie, 12 May 1880, v. 4, BFM; and James M. McCauley to [Lowrie], 12 April 1880, v. 4, BFM.

[5] Coffman to Lowrie, 23 June 1880, v. 4, BFM; James W. Van Dyke to Lowrie, 4 August 1880, v.4, BFM; and Cort to Irving, 14 September 1880, v. 4, BFM.

[6] A "session" is the governing body of a local Presbyterian church charged with responsibility of maintaining "the spiritual government of the church." In line with this duty, the session is given the power to investigate the behavior of members and act as a court when questions occur. See *Manual for Church Officers and Members of the Government, Discipline, and Worship of the Presbyterian Church*, 6th ed. (Office of the General Assembly, 1936), 52ff.

[7] Charles S. McClelland to Irving, 15 April 1881, v. 4, BFM.

[8] Cort to Irving, 16 August 1882, v. 4, BFM.

[9] Cort to Irving, 17 June 1882, v. 4, BFM; and Van Dyke to Irving, 11 January 1883, v. 4, BFM.

[10] Cort to Irving, 16 May 1883, v. 4, BFM; and Dunlap to Irving, 8 August 1883, v. 4, BFM.

[11] Dunlap to Irving, 1884, v. 4, BFM; and Dunlap to Mitchell, 20 November 1884, v. 4, BFM.

[12] Dunlap to Irving, [February 1883], v. 4, BFM; Cort to Irving, 16 May 1883, v. 4, BFM; Dunlap to Irving, 8 August 1883, v. 4, BFM; Dunlap to Irving, 5 February 1884, v. 4, BFM; Dunlap to Ellinwood, 30 July 1885, v. 5, BFM; and Dunlap, "Annual Report of Mission Work at Petchaburi, 31 Dec 1884, v. 5, BFM.

[13] Minutes of the Session, Phet Buri Church, 25-26 December 1880; 11 April, 27 August, and 17 December 1881.

[14] Session Minutes, 26 March, 31 May, and 30 July 1884; and for 1885-1886.

[15] Dunlap, "Annual Report of Mission Work at Petchaburi," 31 December 1884, v. 5, BFM.

[16] Dunlap to Irving, 1884, v. 4 (letter no. 252), BFM; Dunlap to Mitchell, 20 November 1884, v. 4, BFM; and Dunlap, Annual Report of Phet Buri Station, 1884, v. 5, BFM.

[17] Dunlap to Irving, December 1883, v. 4, BFM.

[18] Dunlap, Annual Report of Phet Buri Station, 1884, v. 5, BFM.

[19] A. Willard Cooper to Mitchell, 21 April 1886, v. 5, BFM.

[20] Dunlap, "General Report of the Petchaburi Station for the year

1886," 31 December 1886, v. 20, BFM.

[21] Dunlap to Irving, 5 February 1884, v. 4, BFM indicates that Dunlap initiated an ambitious evangelistic campaign in the rural hinterland around Phet Buri in 1884.

[22] Dunlap became embroiled in a feud with a missionary and other foreigners in Bangkok in 1886, which severely drained Dunlap mentally and spiritually. See James B. Thompson to Mitchell, 26 January 1887, v. 6, BFM; and Thompson to Mitchell, 19 January 1888, v. 6.

[23] Thompson to Mitchell, 19 January 1888, v. 6, BFM.

[24] Dunlap to Mitchell, 7 June 1888, v. 6, BFM; Dunlap, "General Report of Petchaburee Siam Mission Station," 1888, v. 20, BFM; and Thompson to Mitchell, 13 September 1888, v. 4, BFM.

[25] Dunlap, "General Report of Petchaburee Siam Mission Station," 1888, v. 20, BFM; and Thompson, "Report of Mission Hospital," 1888, v. 20, BFM.

[26] J. A. Eakin, "The Narrative of Petchaburi Station," in *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, 1828-1928*, ed. George B. McFarland (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928), 101.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

[1] E. Wachter to Mitchell, 20 January 1888, v. 6, BFM; and Wachter to Mitchell, 14 October 1889, v. 7, BFM.

[2] Wachter to Mitchell, 1 February 1888, v. 6, BFM.

[3] Wachter to Mitchell, 18 January 1889, v. 7, BFM.

[4] Wachter to Mitchell, 1 February 1888, v. 6, BFM; Wachter to Mitchell, 18 January 1889, v. 7, BFM; and Wachter to Mitchell, 14 October 1889, v. 7, BFM.

[5] See Swanson, "This Heathen People," 76 ff., esp. 80.

[6] Thompson to Mitchell, 19 January 1888, v. 6, BFM; and McClure to Mitchell, 25 January 1889, v. 7, BFM. See also Cort to Mitchell, 12 August 1890, v. 7, BFM.

[7] Wachter to Mitchell, 18 January 1889, v. 7, BFM; and Wachter to Mitchell, 14 October 1889, v. 7, BFM.

[8] Thompson to Mitchell, 8 July 1889, v. 7, BFM; Thompson to Jessup, 2 March 1890, v. 7, BFM; and Thompson to Jessup, 10 July 1890, v. 7, BFM.

[9] A. Willard Cooper to Mitchell, 7 February 1891, v. 8, BFM; McClure to Mitchell, 22 January 1892, v. 8, BFM; Thompson to Mitchell, 22 January 1892, v. 8, BFM; and A. Willard Cooper to Brown, 30 July 1900, BFM.

[10] A. Willard Cooper to Speer, 12 December 1895, v. 18, BFM; and John A. Eakin, *Boon-Itt in Siam* (New York: Women's Board of Foreign Missions, n.d.).

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[1] Benjamin P. Paddock to Board Secretary, 2 October 1889, v. 7, BFM; Thompson to Jessup, 16 January 1890, v. 7, BFM; and Minutes of Siam Presbytery, v. 2, 3 January 1889, originals at the Payap University Archives.

[2] McClure to Mitchell, 6 May 1889, v. 7, BFM.

[3] McClure, "Petchaburee Station. General Report for the Year 1889," 3 January 1890, v. 20, BFM.

[4] Cort, "Miss Mary L. Cort's Report of Mission Work for 1889," v. 20, BFM.

- [5] McClure to Mitchell, 6 May 1889, v. 7, BFM; McClure to Mitchell, 29 July 1890, v. 7, BFM; and McClure to Mitchell, 1 December 1890, v. 7, BFM.
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- [7] Thompson to Jessup, 16 January 1890, v. 7, BFM.
- [8] Thompson to Mitchell, 22 January 1892, v. 8, BFM.
- [9] Cort to Mitchell, 22 January 1889, v. 7, BFM.
- [10] Cort to Jessup, 22 July 1890, v. 7, BFM; and Cort to Mitchell, 10 December 1890, BFM.
- [11] Dunlap to Gillispie, 3 February 1893, v. 10, BFM.
- [12] See Phet Buri Session Minutes, 1887ff; and Thompson to Jessup, 16 January 1890, v. 7, BFM, concerning elder resistance.
- [13] Charles E. Eckels to Board Secretaries, 29 September 1890, v. 7, BFM.
- [14] The "presbytery" is comprised of all of the ordained clergy plus lay representatives from each local church for a given geographical area. The presbytery exercises the authority of a bishop over the churches. The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. established two presbyteries in Thailand, the Laos Presbytery in northern Thailand and the Siam Presbytery in central and southern Thailand.
- [15] Minutes of Siam Presbytery, 16 December, 1893, and 10 December 1895.
- [16] McClure to Mitchell, 1 December 1890, v. 7, BFM.
- [17] McClure to Mitchell, 27 January 1891, v. 8, BFM; McClure to

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[18] McClure to Mitchell, 17 March 1891, v. 8, BFM; Mary H. McClure to Mitchell, 4 August 1891, v. 8, BFM; McClure to Mitchell, 17 August 1891, v. 8, BFM; Eckels to Mitchell, 5 October 1891, v. 8, BFM; and, *Minutes of Siam Presbytery*, 12 December 1893.

[19] McClure to Mitchell, 27 November 1891, v. 8, BFM.

[20] Session Minutes, 4 December 1891.

[21] McClure, "General Report of Petchaburee Station for the year 1890," v. 20, BFM.

[22] Jeanie McClure to Grant, 6 February 1893, v. 10, BFM.

[23] Thompson to Gillespie, 19 February 1894, v. 10, BFM.

[24] McClure to Speer, 24 March 1896, v. 12, BFM.

[25] See Session Minutes generally for the years 1895 onwards, esp. 1 February 1895, 3 May 1895, 1 August 1895, and 7 November 1895.

[26] McClure to Brown, 19 October 1898, v. 14, BFM.

[27] McClure to Brown, 19 October 1898, v. 14, BFM.

[28] Altha L. Eakin, letter, June 1907, in *Woman's Work for Woman* 23, 5(May 1908): 116.

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[1] McClure to Brown, 19 October 1898, v. 14, BFM.

[2] McClure to Mitchell, 6 May 1889, v. 7, BFM.

- [3] See James H. Moorhead, "The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925," *Church History* 53(March 1984): 61-77.
- [4] McClure to Grant, 18 July 1893, v. 10, BFM. See also McClure to Mitchell, 22 January 1892, v. 8, BFM.
- [5] McClure, "Bi-monthly Letter of Petchabaree Station," 7 March 1899, v. 14, BFM.
- [6] McClure to Brown, 25 August 1899, v. 14, BFM.
- [7] Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 33-40.
- [8] McClure to Speer, 21 April 1897, v. 12, BFM.
- [9] McClure to Mitchell, 27 January 1891, v. 8, BFM; and McClure to Mitchell, 27 November 1891, v. 8, BFM.
- [10] Lyman to Brown, 14 September 1898, v. 14, BFM.
- [11] McClure to Mitchell, 1 December 1890, v. 7, BFM; and McClure to Brown, 26 May 1899, v. 14.
- [12] McClure to Mitchell, 9 June 1891, v. 8, BFM.
- [13] McClure to Brown, 19 October 1898, v. 14, BFM; McClure to Brown, 3 January 1899, v. 14, BFM; and McClure to Brown, 26 May 1899, v. 14, BFM.
- [14] See Gregory H. Singleton, "Protestant Voluntary Organizations and the Shaping of Victorian America," *American Quarterly* 27 (December 1975): 549-560; Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America" in *Denominationalism*, ed. Russell E. Richey. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 70-105.; and Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in*

America (New York: Harper & Row, 1963): 96-97.

- [15] McClure to Speer, 21 April 1897, v. 12, BFM.
- [16] See Lucien M. Hanks, "The Thai Social Order as Entourage and Circle," in *Change and Persistence in Thai Society*, ed. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 197-218; and Jane Bunnag, "Loose Structure: Fact or Fancy? Thai Society Re-examined," *Journal of the Siam Society* 59(January 1971): 8-9.
- [17] Akin Rabibhadana, *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period, 1782-1873* (Ithaca, NY: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1969), 94.
- [18] Akin defines "informal" patron-client relationships as being those outside the formal sociopolitical hierarchical system. These relationships added to the power of popular patrons, giving them more power than the formal system designated. It benefitted the clients with more social security than they had via the formal system. See Akin, *Organization of Thai Society*, 133ff.
- [19] Charles Hodge, the leading conservative Presbyterian theologian of the nineteenth century, described "covenant" as a religious contract between God and "believers" which is initiated by God as an offer of "salvation to all who will comply with the terms on which it is offered, i.e. the demands of the gospel." Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, ed. Edward N. Gross, abridged ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), III.2.1-2.
- [20] See Daniel McGilvary, undated letter, in *Foreign Missionary* 28, 3(August 1869): 58-63; and Swanson, "This Heathen People," 78-79.
- [21] Jasper Ingersoll, "The Priest Role in Central Village Thailand," in *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*, ed. M. Nash (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 65-66.

- [22] Akin, *Organization of Thai Society*, 122-23.
- [23] For a typical example of the missionary attitude towards the Buddhist monkhood, see Mary Lovina Cort, *Siam: or the Heart of Farther India* (New York: Anson D. K. Randolph & Company, 1886), 114ff.
- [24] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, III.6.2.
- [25] See S. C. Peoples to Irving, January 1884, v. 4, BFM.
- [26] Wachter to Mitchell, 14 July 1886, v. 6, BFM.
- [27] *Wachirayan*, 14(November, R.S. 114 [1896]), 1488. (in Thai).
- [28] Msr. Pallegoix, *Telling About Siam* (in Thai), trans. Sunt T. Komolbutr. (Kaona Press, 1977), 825-826.
- [29] Buell to Lowrie, 4 December 1843, v. 1, BFM. My thanks to Ach. Prasit Pongudom of the Office of History for providing the citations for the material contained in this paragraph.
- [30] See Swanson, "This Heathen People," esp. 152ff.
- [31] See Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 76.
- [32] Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 105.
- [33] See, Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 105-106.
- [34] McClure to Speer, 21 April 1897, v. 12, BFM.
- NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

- [1] Cole, undated letter, *Woman's Work for Woman* 13, 3(March

- 1883): 82-84.
- [2] There is an intriguing passage in Acts 19:1-7 where Paul meets a group of "disciples," that is Christians, who were baptized with "John's Baptism." What makes the passage interesting in light of Cole's feelings is that while this group of Christians had not received the Holy Spirit and not been baptized in Christ's name, Acts still acknowledged them as Christians. They were accepted as such by Paul even though he decided to re-baptize them. In this instance, at least, the New Testament takes a relatively broad view of who is a Christian, as did Cole.

- [3] Dodd to Speer, 25 March 1896, v. 13, BFM.

- [4] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 84.

- [5] Taylor, "A Missionary in Siam," vol. 1 (San Francisco, 1947, typescript), 176. emphasis in the original.

- [6] McFarland, undated letter, *Foreign Missionary* 36, 6(November 1877): 185-186; McDonald, "Signs of Progress in Siam," *Foreign Missionary* 36, 12(May 1878): 364-368; and Sturge, letter dated 17 July 1882, *Foreign Missionary*, 41, 6(November 1882): 260.

- [7] Dunlap, letter dated 24 February 1879, *Foreign Missionary* 38, 1(June 1879):17-18; letter dated 7 April 1879, *Foreign Missionary* 38, 4(September 1879): 131-132; and letter dated 5 February 1883, *Foreign Missionary*, 41, 12(May 1883): 523.

- [8] Van Dyke to Mitchell, 8 February 1888, v. 6, BFM.

- [9] Philip Hughes, "Christianity and Culture: A Case Study in Northern Thailand" (Th.D. diss, South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, 1982), 201.

- [10] See Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*; Esther P. Wakeman, "Sri Ngam Church: An Historical Inquiry into the Origins of the Church in Northern Thailand," *East Asia Journal of Theology* 3

(1985): 154-164; and Kummool Sriwichai, *Our Home Church: A History of the Phraphornchai Church* (in Thai) (Chiang Mai: Office of History, Church of Christ in Thailand, 1989).

[11] Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949), 207; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 36-37; and, L. C. Rudolph, *Hoosier Zion: The Presbyterians in Early Indiana* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 27ff.

[12] McClure to Mitchell, 6 May 1889, and 29 July 1889, v. 7, BFM.

NOTES FOR THE CONCLUSION

[1] Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 159-160.