

The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

2023 - Thailand's Greatest Year

**Compiled by Reed B. Haslam
Thailand Missionary 1973-1975**



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- Announcement (2015)
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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thailand “2023” – The Greatest Year A Concise History of the Coming Forth of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

Introduction

The dedication of the Thailand Bangkok Temple was the centerpiece of 2023, but it was not all that happened. After the temple was dedicated, the Church announced that the Thailand Bangkok Mission would be split east and west into the Thailand Bangkok East and Thailand Bangkok West missions. Following that news, the Church announced that Bangkok would be the home to a new Missionary Training Center.

While I was a missionary (1973-1975), thoughts of a temple in Thailand seemed impossible. Upon arrival, every branch in Thailand was presided over by a missionary. Later, President Morris called a Chinese brother as the branch president in Chiang Mai, but a missionary still presided over the Bangkok branch. A lot of membership growth would be necessary before church leadership could consider Thailand as a location for a House of the Lord. The effort to prepare to build a temple in Bangkok started long before the temple was announced. Let’s review the major steps that led to the most incredible year for the church in Thailand.

President Gordon B. Hinckley Visits Thailand and recalls the country’s Dedication for the Preaching of the Gospel in 1966¹

President Henry D Moyle (a member of the First Presidency) called Elder Gordon B. Hinckley (an assistant to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles) to his office. He showed him a world map and explained, “I will soon propose to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve that we divide the world into areas, each to be supervised by a General Authority. I’ve got all areas of the world covered except Asia. Would you be willing to take Asia?” Elder Hinckley responded, “President Moyle if you need someone to supervise Asia, I’d be willing to try.”² Elder Hinckley did so well with the assignment that he became “the Apostle for Asia.”



Photo 1 - Elder Hinckley with Elder Hanks and President Garner in Lumphini Park



Photo 2 - The first six Elders Hess, Winegar, Hanson Basker, White, and Christiansen

On November 2, 1966, in Lumphini Park, Elder Hinckley dedicated Thailand for the preaching of the gospel. The first six missionaries to Thailand arrived on February 2, 1968.

On June 12, 2000, President Gordon B. Hinckley became the

¹ Source: churchofjesuschristtemples.org – grammatical edits applied

² The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley: Go Forward with Faith pg 208
Concise History - 1



Photo 3 - President Hinckley greets Sister Srilaksana at the pre-Birthday celebration

first president of the Church to visit Thailand, where he enjoyed a “pre-birthday” celebration hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Bhichai Rattakul. The following day, President Hinckley also met with Bangkok Governor Bhichit Rattakul and Thailand Prime Minister Chuan Leepkai, who thanked the prophet for all the work that Church volunteers had rendered for Thailand, noting, in particular, the 100 volunteers who had taught more than 300,000 English teachers and students over the previous three years.

Bangkok was the second stop in a tour of Asia and the South Pacific to dedicate four temples in Fukuoka, Japan; Adelaide, Australia; Melbourne, Australia; and Suva, Fiji. Before leaving Bangkok, President Hinckley addressed a congregation of over 2,600 members at the Thailand Air Force Convention Center. Some members had traveled 18 hours by bus to be in attendance.

In his remarks, President Hinckley recalled his first visit to the country in 1961 when there were just a half dozen members of the Church. Later, in 1966, President Keith E. Garner of the Southern Far East Mission organized the Thailand District, and President Hinckley returned in November of that year to dedicate modern Thailand for the preaching the gospel. “We went quietly in the morning into Lumpini Park, a small group of us, including Elder Marion D. Hanks of the Seventy, and there we lifted our voices in prayer. We prayed that the Lord would smile upon this land, that He would touch it by the power of His Holy Spirit, that the way would be opened for missionaries to come here, that the faithful would accept the truth, and that the Lord would do great and good work here.” He continued, “It’s been a long time since I was here, and I have seen a real miracle.” He told the members that they were pioneers of the Lord’s work in their country and promised that if they were faithful, the time would come when a temple would be constructed in Thailand. “The Lord expects so very, very much of you. He expects you to be the best people in all of Thailand, and you ought to be because you have a knowledge of His everlasting truth.”³

Finding a Location⁴

The search for a temple site in Bangkok began in 2005. The Special Projects Department is responsible for finding a suitable location for LDS Temples. Today, the department is much busier than in 2005. In President Hinckley’s day, he wanted to see every site before making a purchase. Today, far too many temples are being announced, so no one can visit them all.

The Worldwide Economic Crisis of 2007-2008 offered the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints an opportunity to make timely real estate investments worldwide. The

³ “We have been on a long journey—but it was a great occasion,” Church News 1 Jul. 2000, 27 Aug. 2010 <<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38065/We-have-been-on-a-long-journey--but-it-was-a-great-occasion.html>>.

⁴ President Karl Dodge (2006-2009) and Wisan Wisanbannawit assisted with this section.



Photo 4 - The former bank building that became a church office building where the temple now stands.

Special Projects Department at Church Headquarters sent representatives to several countries to look for land that could one day provide space for temples and other needed structures.

Karl Dodge was President of the Bangkok Thailand Mission (2006-2009). Working with these church representatives, they visited several potential sites. They narrowed the selection down to two sites near the Asoke Meetinghouse (the first chapel in Bangkok). One site was the Japanese Embassy property on the southeast corner of New Phetchaburi Road and Soi Asoke. The other site was a

large lot on which stood an abandoned bank building just west of the same intersection.

For many years after missionary work began in Thailand, the Church couldn't own property. For example, when the Church purchased the property for the Asoke Meetinghouse in the early 1970s, the property was owned not by the Church but by a group of three brethren (which generally included the Mission President). For decades, the Church's missionaries held only tourist visas, which expired every ten weeks, requiring them to leave the country and return to Thailand for another ten weeks. Before 2007, church representatives had evaluated properties, but because of the ownership problem, the Church never made any large purchases.

Recognizing that the Japanese Embassy property was too large, the former bank building was chosen when they learned that the City Airline terminal for the new train line between central Bangkok and the new Suvarnabhumi International Airport was to be constructed just behind the back fence. In May 2007, the deal was made, and the Church purchased the bank property. The bank building was situated on a rather large lot, and there was a large field of grass behind the bank building. Visitors to the temple from outside Thailand could easily ride the train from the airport to the church property, take care of business, and quickly depart to the airport.

At the time of purchase, the bank building was vacant. The government required the Church to place the property in service within one year. So, a portion of the main floor was renovated as the meetinghouse for the Din Daeng branch, as well as a small office for the Facilities Management group. This renovation also added the name of the Church to the building. During the following years, the Church performed additional remodeling inside the building. The remodeling allowed other church departments, including the translation team and mission offices, to move in.

In 2010, as my wife and I returned home from a visit to Phuket, Thailand, we stayed at a hotel near Suvarnabhumi Airport. I decided to take the airport rail line to Makasaan station. From there, I walked around the block to the property. I found the Din Daeng branch clerk finishing his work for the day. I told him we were sitting on sacred ground as a temple would be built on this land one day.

Today, a back door sits between Makasaan station and the church property.

The Church maintained the office building until the time arrived to prepare for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Stakes Organized in Thailand

Elder Neal L. Maxwell of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles created the Bangkok Thailand Stake on June 18, 1995. Tipparat Kitsawad, who grew up as a Catholic Church member, was selected as Stake President, while Ponchai Juntratip, a blind man, was chosen as Stake Patriarch.

Elder Gerrit W. Gong, a General Authority Seventy, created the second and third stakes in June 2014. They were the Bangkok Thailand West Stake on June 14 and the Bangkok Thailand North Stake on June 15. The north stake was blessed to have the first stake-sized building in Thailand, the Chaengwattana building in Nonthaburi, which was constructed from 2010 to 2011.

Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong, a General Authority Seventy, created the Ubon Ratchthani Stake on November 27, 2016.

So why are these stake creation dates referenced in this document? Church guidelines suggest that four stakes are required in an area before a temple can be considered.

The Announcement of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

On April 5, 2015, President Thomas S. Monson announced a temple for Bangkok, Thailand. The announcement came during his opening remarks at the Sunday Morning Session of the General Conference. At the time of the announcement, there were approximately 18,000⁵ Church members in 38 congregations in Thailand. The temple would serve Latter-day Saints throughout Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia at this time belonged to the Hong Kong China Temple district. Other temples announced at this time included one in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and another in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The Ivory Coast Temple is still under construction. The small Temple in Haiti was completed in August 2019.

Former missionaries and perhaps some Thai members were listening to the conference live via the internet and shouted for joy. I was vacationing with my family that day in St. George, Utah. I reacted by asking, “Did I just hear what I think I heard?”

Elder Quentin L. Cook shared the following in the April 2016 General Conference.

We have some sense of the rejoicing that is going on in Quito, Ecuador; Harare, Zimbabwe; Belém, Brazil; and Lima, Peru, both with members and missionaries, based on what happened in Bangkok, Thailand, a year ago when that temple was announced. Sister Shelly Senior, wife of the then-president of the Thailand Bangkok

⁵ The author doubts the accuracy of the total count of members in Thailand, believing that membership records we not always well maintained.

Mission, David Senior, emailed family and friends to say that after she and her husband had listened to President Monson announce that temple, there had been “12 sleepless hours and lots of tears of happiness.” They called their mission assistants at 11:30 p.m. and informed them. The assistants called all the missionaries. The report came back that the “whole mission was awake in the middle of the night jumping on their beds.” Sister Senior humorously admonished family and friends, “Please don’t tell the Missionary Department!”

The deep spiritual response of the members in Thailand was equally strong. I am confident there have been spiritual preparations in hearts and homes and manifestations from heaven preparing the Saints where these newly announced temples will be located.



Photo 5 - Young Women Look Forward to the Bangkok Thailand Temple

Sister Senior, in Thailand, had some special hand mirrors made for her personal teaching, especially with sisters. There was a temple etched in the mirror with the wording, “See Yourself in the Temple.” As people gazed into the mirror, they saw themselves in the temple. The Seniors taught the investigators and members to picture themselves in the temple and make the necessary lifestyle changes and spiritual preparations to meet this goal.⁶

⁶ Ensign or Liahona April 2016

The Artistic Rendering



Photo 6- The original rendering of the Thailand Bangkok Temple with Angel Moroni

Historically, the artistic rendering of a new temple was made public on the day of the groundbreaking ceremony. A new policy releases the rendering when it is completed and approved. The Church released the rendering of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on March 19, 2018. The design features a multi-story temple with nine⁷ spires, four in front and four in back, with the center spire holding the statue of Moroni⁸.

The Ground Breaking – January 26, 2019

While not a requirement to build a temple, it is customary to hold a groundbreaking ceremony. This day for the Saints in Thailand was their day for that event. The following is the program of the day for the groundbreaking.

ConductingElder Wisit Khanakham, Native Thai and Area Authority Seventy
PresidingElder Robert G. Gay, Presidency of the Seventy
InvocationSuchat Chaichana, President Bangkok Thailand Stake
SpeakerSister Wipharat Uanphoklang - Korat Ward - Ubon Stake
SpeakerElder Robert G. Gay, Presidency of the Seventy
Speaker and Site Dedication.....Elder David F. Evans⁹, GA Seventy, Asia Area President
Benediction.....Sister Pramong Jongkhao
Ceremonial Breaking of Ground.....Invited Participants

⁷ The author has wondered if the nine spires was not a symbolic tip of the hat to King Phumipol Adulyadej the 9th monarch of the Chakri Dynasty who died October 16, 2016.

⁸ When President Russell M. Nelson became President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, new temples started to be rendered without the Angel Moroni. Church Leaders in Thailand petitioned to have the Angel Moroni removed from the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

⁹ David F. Evans was the son of David C. Evans, a pioneer in the field of computer graphics. He was the founder and chief operating officer of Evans and Sutherland Computer Corporation. The author worked for that company from 1984-1991.



Photo 7 – Breaking ground for the Thailand Bangkok Temple

The site preparation was exceptional, including the construction of walls on three sides and tents to provide shade from the hot Bangkok sun. The flowers at the podium were beautiful. The number of people attending the site was estimated to be 250-300. “Facebook Live” carried a video feed of the event. Over 600 people viewed the event.

Presidents of the Thailand Bangkok Mission present at the groundbreaking included Hammond (current), Eldredge, White, Slater, Hansen, Smith, and Senior.

Larry R. White, who attended the groundbreaking with his wife, added the following comment. The weather was exceptional: sunny with a slight breeze, no smog, and not too hot.” [January is often a pleasant month in Bangkok]. “I remember that one of the hymns the very exceptional Thai choir sang in four-part harmony in the Thai language was “The Morning Breaks the Shadows Flee,” which deeply moved me to the point of tears thinking back on our very humble beginnings in 1968 and the fact that there were those who dreamed of this day who could only be present if they were permitted to view the proceedings of this auspicious occasion from the world of spirits.”

History of the Construction of the Thailand Bangkok Temple

For every Temple, the Church selects a couple to document the Temple’s construction and chat with workers who are building it to explain the nature of the building they are constructing. Blair and Lisa Walker were selected to document the construction of the Bangkok Thailand Temple. They spent three and a half years in Bangkok doing this work.



Photo 8 - Brother and Sister Walker with Brother Anurat

After the ground was broken, it seemed to take forever to get the building up to ground level. There were good reasons for this. The first is they were going to provide two floors of underground parking. They also had to create a vast tank to sequester rain runoff for the entire area of the site. Going underground in Bangkok takes unique construction because of the exceptionally high groundwater level.

Brother and Sister Walker spent time with the project workers to help them understand the importance of the building they were constructing.

Sister Walker reported, “Anurat Kaeocha was the Project Manager. We gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon, and it was a couple of years later (there were six sets of missionaries who taught him) before the spirit changed his heart, and he accepted the challenge to be baptized. We will be forever grateful for the friendship we have with him.” He was featured in the film about the Temple used during the Open House. I doubt anyone records how many people building Latter-day Saint temples are converted to the gospel, but converting the project manager was noteworthy.

As with several types of records, their work is now locked away in the Church History Library. There are significant restrictions on who may access these temple construction records. The same is true for the prayer of dedication given for every country before the first missionaries arrive. However, many mission offices have copies of the dedicatory prayer for their own nations, and that’s how these prayers become publicly available. On the other hand, the prayers of dedication for LDS Temples are publicly available within twenty-four hours of the formal conclusion of the last dedicatory session.

Temple President Called

On February 7, 2023, the First Presidency announced the calling of Wisit Khanakham and Sumamaan Srisarakham Khanakham as temple president and matron. Shortly after their call, they made plans to visit the Manila Philippines Temple for an entire month to receive training.

Brother Kanakham is among the members with the longest membership records in Thailand. He was a member when I was a missionary. I wish I could take a photo from my mind to remember the day I saw him with other members.

After I returned home, he served as a missionary in Thailand. While a missionary, he met sister Sumamaan, a sister missionary. He became the first head of the Presiding Bishopric’s Office in Bangkok. Later, he was called as an Area Authority Seventy from Thailand, being the first native Thai to be called to that position.



Photo 9 – President Wisan and Sister Sumamaan Khanakham

Their lifelong experiences prepared them for this calling.

Open House and Dedication Dates Announced

On March 27, 2023, the Church publicly announced the Open House and Dedication dates for the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

- Open House: Media and Special Guest days August 28-31, 2023.
- Open House: Public September 1-16, 2023
- Dedication: Sunday, October 22, 2023

Temple Presidency – Counselors and Assistant Matrons Announced

On June 21, 2023, President Khanakham announced who would serve with him as counselors and assistant matrons.



Photo 10 - Temple Presidency and Matrons

President Wisit and Sister Sumamaan Khanakham (center) were called as President and Matron of the Thailand Bangkok Temple. President Khanakham then selected Sanit Chotiphairat as 1st counselor, with his wife Aronong (left) as assistant matron. Chaimongkol Surakkhaka will serve as the second counselor, and his wife, Petcha (right), will serve as assistant matron.

The Open House of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

Open House Committee Leadership

Chairpersons: Chaimongkhon and Petchara Surakkhaka (Called to temple presidency)

Chairpersons: Boonchan and Voraphon Tokhan (Effective: June 21, 2023)

Executive Secretary: Steve G. Stevens.

English

Subcommittees	Subcommittee Chairpersons
Communication	Chaithaya Thongmee
Finance	Sanit Chotiphairat
Historical	Wisuchalak Khannakham
Hosting	Peter & Pongpaka Wilden
Music	Prawin & Suthasinee Thapkhwa
Parking & Transportation	Yarndej Saengsin
Physical Facilities	Wisarn Wisanbannawit
Safety & Security	Prayat & Natthida Hengrang
Technology	Sathit Kaivanvathana
Translation	Sasithon Krisanalome
Ushers	Nathaphon & Chitawadee Sithisophonkul

ไทย

คณะอนุกรรมการ	ผู้รับผิดชอบ/สำรอง
การสื่อสารและงานประชาสัมพันธ์	ไฉทยา ทองมี
การเงิน	สนิท โชติไพรัตน์
ประวัติศาสตร์	วิสุขลักษณ์ คณาคำ
งานเจ้าภาพและการรับรอง	Peter & Pongpaka Wilden
ดนตรี	ประวิณ/สุธาสินี ทับขวา
การจอดรถและการขนส่ง	ญาณเดช แสงศิลป์
สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวก	วิศาล วิศาลบรรณวิทย์
ความปลอดภัยและความมั่นคง	ประหยัด เสงรัมย์/ณัฐธิดา
เทคโนโลยี	สาธิต ไกลรรรณชนะ
งานแปลงานล่าม	ศศิธร กฤษณะโลม
การต้อนรับ	ณัฐพล/จิตวดี สิทธิโสภณกุล

Special Days Before the start of the Open House

The Church assigned Elder Garrett W. Gong, an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to the Media and VIP days. On Saturday, August 26, before the official open house started, he met with many Young Single Adults and took them on a special tour of the Temple.



Photo 11 - Elder Gong was assigned to attend the beginning days of the Open House. Before the open house, he focused his attention on Young Single Adults. The visit was announced two weeks before the Open House but planned months earlier.



Photo 12 - More than 375 Young Adults join Elder Gong for a photo in the courtyard outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple on August 26, 2023. Photo: Deseret News.

On Sunday evening, August 27, Elder Gong held a unique devotional for members of the three stakes in the Bangkok area. In preparation for the meeting, the two wards in the building moved their Sunday services to the third-floor chapel. The evening meeting was held in the first-floor chapel of the multipurpose building behind the Temple. The meeting was broadcast to the chapel on the third floor. After the meeting, he greeted everyone who wanted to meet him in the courtyard outside.

August 28 was media day. Many members of the media were present. However, the key visitors that day were government leaders. The Governor of Bangkok, Chadchart Sittipunt, and the past governor, Dr. Pichit Rattakun, a longtime friend of the Church, visited.

August 30 and 31 were VIP days. Some of the VIPs brought flowers as a gift. Those who received the flowers distributed them around the multipurpose building.

Among the VIPs visiting on August 30 was Dr Sarayut Supapannachart. He was a highly regarded surgeon who received medical training in the United States. Some members of the Church know him as Dr. Supa. He was called away to an emergency after he visited the Temple. He urged many of his staff and administrators to attend the open house, and they did¹⁰.

The Public Open House of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

The busiest times during the open house were when members of the Church came by busloads from areas outside Bangkok. The Tippets had considered many ideas regarding how to raise money to allow members to travel to Bangkok. Two Relief Society sisters asked Elder Mark and Sister Sandra Tippets, serving as senior missionaries in Udorn (far Northeast Thailand), for help with their idea. They wanted to design and make a Bangkok Thailand Temple necklace. All sales would help members in the Udorn District travel to the Temple Open House. Later, while walking through the “Terminal 21 Mall” in Bangkok, they found a store that made custom jewelry. Mark said, “We feel the idea of selling custom jewelry was inspired. Selling temple necklaces and tie tacks also offered broader appeal, including Church members and current and former missionaries.” These jewelry pieces were popular items. The mission offices kept some to sell to those who wanted them.



Photo 13 The gold tie tack



Photo 14 The silver necklace pendant

The manufacturer was “Wear a Wish,” whose owner was a Christian. Designers visited the temple two or three times to create molds for the jewelry. The owner also visited the Open House.

Elder and Sister Tippets enjoyed the fruits of their labors when the bus from Udorn arrived at the temple.

¹⁰ Information provided by Judy Ogden

Thanks to faithful Thai members and many returned missionaries, all the jewelry was sold. We collected enough funds to charter four buses and send funds to help the saints in Chiang Mai (distant north Thailand) attend the Open House. After the Open House, there was still money in the account. This money was used to offset the cost of travel for members to the temple for their endowments and sealings. It was not until months later that the funds collected from the jewelry sales were depleted.

Here are the estimated attendance numbers for the Open House of the Bangkok Thailand Temple¹¹:

- Total Attendance 24,350
- Average Weekday 1,216
- Average Saturday 3,710

The Dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

Elder Rasband's Pre-Dedication Events

Elder Ronald Rasband arrived in Bangkok a few days before the dedication ceremony on October 22, 2023. During this time, he conducted two significant events:

- A meeting with all the missionaries of the Bangkok Thailand Mission
- A meeting with church leaders in the Bangkok Thailand Temple District

Other general authorities attending the dedication were:

- Elder Benjamin Tai – Asia Area President
- Elder Kelly Johnson – 1st counselor Asia Area Presidency (President Bangkok Thailand Mission 2015-2018)
- Elder Michael Teh – 2nd counselor Asia Area Presidency
- Elder Kevin R. Duncan – Executive Director of the Temple Department
- Elder Christian – Assistant Executive Director of the Temple Department

Bringing the Missionaries to Bangkok

In my day as a missionary in Thailand, bringing all the missionaries to Bangkok was no big deal. When I arrived, there were only 51 of us. In groups of 6-15, we'd gather in Bangkok every 10 weeks to leave the country to renew our Thai Tourist visas. We had two mission conferences in October 1973 and October 1974, where we all gathered for training, sharing ideas, and having a little fun. In 1974, we had to walk through knee-deep flood water from the beach houses to the highway and return to Bangkok. In October 1973, we came to Bangkok to hear Elder Howard W. Hunter on a P-day as he was returning to Salt Lake after a visit to Australia. I was hoping for more Stake Conferences in Australia in the future!

¹¹ Data provided by Steve Gary Stevens

Bringing all 180 missionaries in Thailand to Bangkok was expensive, but this was the Dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

With the use of his wife's notes, President Kelly Burgener (Thailand Bangkok Mission President 2021-2024) shared the following:

On Friday, October 20, the missionaries were to arrive at one of the cultural halls in the multipurpose building at 3:00 p.m. They would remain set up for the photograph from 3:00 p.m. to a little before 4:00 p.m. President and Sister Burgener planned for the missionaries to sing hymns to remain reverent and invite the spirit to be with them during the devotional.

After the missionaries had sung four hymns, the chorister asked President Burgener what other hymns he wanted to sing. He asked Sister Burgener, and she said, "I Stand All Amazed." The missionaries were singing this inspirational hymn with all their hearts when Elder and Sister Rasband walked into the cultural hall. Elder and Sister Rasband stopped and listened as they looked over the 180 missionaries of the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Elder and Sister Rasband walked over to President and Sister Burgener when the missionaries finished singing. Elder Rasband's first words were,



Photo 15 - Elder Rasband with all missionaries of the Thailand Bangkok Mission, Multipurpose Building behind the temple.

"Why did you choose to sing that hymn?" President Burgener replied, "Because it is Sister Burgener's favorite hymn." Then Elder Rasband, with eyes watering, said, "It is my favorite hymn, too."

Elder Rasband spoke directly to the missionaries; among other things, he said:

- *We are here to dedicate a temple of the Lord. I was sent here by a Prophet of God. A lot of the world is rejoicing about this temple. We live in a darkened world, but I know on Sunday, the heavens will part as the Lord smiles on Bangkok, Thailand.*
- *You are here by revelation. I know you are here by revelation. We are gathering the elect right now.*

He relayed the following from President Nelson.

- *“You are here by revelation. I know you are here by revelation. We are gathering the elect right now.”*
- *We love you! We love you, Elders and Sisters! Nearly every member prays for you. The Lord loves you!” “We thank you!*
- *“We need you! We need you now, and we need you every day for the rest of your lives.”*

Bringing Church Leaders from all over the Bangkok Thailand Temple District to the Temple

On Saturday, October 21, Elder and Sister Rasband hosted church leaders from all areas of the Bangkok Thailand Temple district. The gathering took place in a hotel ballroom in central Bangkok. The district includes the following twelve nations:

- Thailand - 4 stakes, 2 districts
- Cambodia - 2 stakes, 4 districts
- Vietnam - 2 districts
- Laos - 1 branch
- Myanmar - 2 branches
- India – 4 stakes, 3 districts
- Pakistan – 3 districts
- Malaysia – 5 districts
- Singapore – 1 stake
- Indonesia – 2 stakes, 1 district
- Sri Lanka – 1 district



Photo 16 - Elder Rasband meets with church leaders from all over the Temple District at a hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, on the evening of the temple dedication. Photo – Church News

Representatives from all the above-listed countries attended the meeting.

Note: Bangladesh and Nepal are geographically in the temple district. However, the Church News did not mention these nations in its event coverage. That is probably because the Church has no significant presence in either country.

Among the nations listed above, the following temples have been announced or are under construction:

- Cambodia (Phnom Phen - Under Construction)
- India (Bengaluru - Under Construction)
- Singapore (Singapore – Announced, Rendering Available)
- Indonesia (Jakarta - Announced)

Elder Tai said, *“It is interesting to see the current development of the Church in the Asia Area, where half of the world’s population resides. “Any way into the future, it’s easy to see how this could be multiple areas, just because of the way the Church will grow. Bangkok’s location, ease of access, and logistical connections makes it an ideal area as a center of the Church in Southeast Asia — and with a temple, even more so.*

Among those attending the gathering was Tiengsack Inthavong, the branch president in Vientiane, Laos. He was the first Laotian to serve a mission (he served in Thailand) from 2006-2008. He and his wife were the first from Laos to be married in the temple (Hawaii 2012)¹².

The Dedication of the Thailand Bangkok Temple

Following the current protocol, two dedication sessions are held. The first session is at 10:00 a.m., and the second is at 1:30 p.m. The dedicatory prayer is the same at each session, but the speakers differ. Video is broadcast to church buildings to accommodate those not seated in the temple. The two chapels in the multipurpose building behind the temple were nearby locations.

The courtyard between the temple and the multipurpose building was full between sessions, as many members shared their feelings with friends.

Attendance at Temple Dedication Sessions¹³

Morning Session

- Temple 491
- Annex 441
- Total 832

Afternoon Session

- Temple 450
- Annex 264
- Total 714

¹² The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia, pg. 755

¹³ Data provided by Steve Gary Stevens - Executive Secretary for the Bangkok Thailand Temple Open House and Dedication Committee

Reported totals of dedication broadcast attendance:

Thailand

- Morning Session 1,748
- Afternoon Session 827
- Total 2,575

Cambodia

- Morning Session 1,392
- 2nd Session 374
- Total 1,766

Indonesia

- Morning Session 1,010
- Afternoon Session 200
- Total 1,210

West Malaysia

- Morning Session 324
- Afternoon Session 26
- Total 350



Photo 17 - Some of the General Authorities who attended the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple with their wives. Photo Church News

คำสวดอ้อนวอนอุทิศพระวิหารกรุงเทพ ประเทศไทย

22 ตุลาคม 2023

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ข้าแต่พระเจ้าผู้เป็นเจ้า พระบิดานิรันดร องค์เอ โลกิอิมผู้ยิ่งใหญ่ผู้ทรงพระชนม์และทรงปกครองทั้งแผ่นดินโลก แผนนิรันดรของพระองค์เป็นพรแก่บุตรธิดาของพระองค์ทุกคน ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายมาอยู่เบื้องพระพักตร์พระองค์ด้วยความสำนึกคุณและความถ่อมตน เพื่ออุทิศพระวิหารกรุงเทพ ประเทศไทยอันงดงาม ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายขอบพระทัยอย่างสุดซึ้งสำหรับพระนิเวศน์ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ของพระองค์ สถานนมัสการอันศักดิ์สิทธิ์ในแผ่นดินเก่าแก่แห่งนี้ ขอให้บุตรธิดาของพระองค์ที่เข้าพระวิหารแห่งนี้ได้รับความรู้มากขึ้นเกี่ยวกับพระองค์ พระผู้เป็นเจ้าแท้จริงองค์เดียว และพระเยซูคริสต์ พระบุตรที่รักของพระองค์

พระบิดาเจ้าข้า ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายรักพระองค์ และขอบพระทัยสำหรับของประทานแห่งพระเจ้าและพระผู้ช่วยให้รอดของพวกข้าพระองค์ พระเยซูคริสต์ โดยจุดประสงค์อันศักดิ์สิทธิ์ของพระองค์ พระผู้ช่วยให้รอดทรงกำหนดเส้นทางพันธสัญญาไว้ให้พวกข้าพระองค์เดินตาม และโดยการชดใช้อันไม่มีขอบเขต ได้เปิดประตูแห่งความรอดให้คนทุกรุ่นและทุกสมัยการประทาน ขอบพระทัยสำหรับการปฏิบัติศาสนกิจ ความจงรัก คำสอน และการพลีพระชนม์ชีพเพื่อการชดใช้อันยิ่งใหญ่ของพระผู้ช่วยให้รอด

ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายสำนึกคุณต่อพระกิตติคุณอันเป็นนิมิตที่ฟื้นฟูผ่านศาสดาพยากรณ์ โจเซฟ สมิท และต่อการออกมาของพระคัมภีร์มอรมอน: พยานหลักฐานอีกเล่มหนึ่งของพระเยซูคริสต์ นับเป็นพรอย่างยิ่งที่พระคัมภีร์เล่มนี้มีแปลอยู่ในหลายภาษาของท้องถิ่น

พระวิหารแห่งนี้ ขอบพระทัยสำหรับศาสดาพยากรณ์ที่มีชีวิตอยู่ ประธานรัสเซลล์ เอ็ม. เนลสัน และสำหรับทุกคนที่รับใช้กับท่านในฝ่ายประธานสูงสุด โควรัมอัครสาวกสิบสอง และสภาต่างๆ ในศาสนจักรของพระองค์

บัดนี้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายมาอยู่เบื้องพระพักตร์พระองค์ ตามการกำกับดูแลของประธาน เนลสัน โดยอำนาจฐานะปุโรหิตแห่งเมลคิเซเดคอันศักดิ์สิทธิ์และในตำแหน่งอัครสาวก อันศักดิ์สิทธิ์ซึ่งข้าพระองค์ดำรงอยู่ พวกข้าพระองค์อุทิศและอุทิศถวายพระวิหารกรุงเทพ ประเทศไทยทั้งดงามแห่งนี้แด่พระองค์ พระผู้เป็นเจ้าของผู้ทรงฤทธานุภาพ และแด่พระเจ้า และพระผู้ช่วยในพระองค์ของพวกข้าพระองค์ พระเยซูคริสต์ ขอให้พระวิหารแห่งนี้บรรลุดุจดประสงฆ์ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ที่ว่า “ศักดิ์สิทธิ์แด่พระเจ้า” และเป็นดั่งองค์กรภักย์บนแผ่นดินโลกในแผนนิรันดรของพระองค์ แยกออกจากวิถีของโลก ขอให้ทุกคนผู้มาที่นี่ ผู้ได้รับการรับรองต่อพระเจ้า เข้าใจกระจ่างชัดมากขึ้นถึงหลักคำสอนของพระกิตติคุณ ความหวังเกี่ยวกับนิรันดรแห่งชีวิต และสันติสุขที่ทรงสัญญาไว้

ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายทูลขอพระองค์ทรงอวยพรที่ดินผืนนี้และอาคารข้างเคียงที่สวยงาม รวมถึงห้องนมัสการ ที่พักพระวิหาร สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกในส่วนของคุณะเผยแผ่ และบริเวณอื่นๆ ของพระวิหารแห่งนี้ ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายอุทิศโถงบัพติสมา บริเวณศาสนพิธีชั้นเตรียม ห้องเ็นดาวเม้นท์ ห้องฝึก แทนบูชาศักดิ์สิทธิ์ และห้องซีเลสเชียล โปรดทรงคุ้มครองดูแลฐานราก โครงสร้างภายนอกและยอดพระวิหารที่โดดเด่น พื้น กำแพง ผนัง ประตู เครื่องตกแต่ง และระบบกลไกต่างๆ โปรดทรงคุ้มครองอาคารหลังนี้จากภัยธรรมชาติ จากการมุงร้ายหรือการก่อวินาศกรรมที่อาจทำให้บริเวณศักดิ์สิทธิ์นี้เสียหาย และขอทรงหลังเทพให้บรรดาช่างศิลป์ ช่างฝีมือ และคนงานทั้งหลายที่ได้แสดงผลงานที่ดีที่สุดของพวกเขาไว้ในพระวิหารที่สวยงามแห่งนี้

ทูลขอพระองค์ทรงอวยพรทุกคนที่รับใช้ในพระวิหารแห่งนี้ รวมทั้งประธานพระวิหาร และที่ปรึกษา ภรรยาประธานพระวิหารกับผู้ช่วย เจ้าหน้าที่พระวิหาร อาสาสมัคร และ ลูกจ้าง

พระวิหารแห่งนี้จะเป็นพระวิหารที่อุทิศและเปิดดำเนินการแห่งที่หนึ่งร้อยแปดสิบห้า ในศาสนจักรของพระเยซูคริสต์แห่งวิสุทธิชนยุคสุดท้าย ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายขอขอบคุณ ส่วนสิบของวิสุทธิชนที่ซื่อสัตย์ทั่วโลกผู้ทำให้การสร้างพระวิหารแห่งนี้เกิดขึ้นได้ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายแสดงความสำนึกคุณด้วยการจ่ายส่วนสิบและเงินบริจาคอย่างซื่อสัตย์ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลาย เหล่าบุตรธิดาของพระองค์ ผูกมัดตนโดยทำพันธสัญญาต่อ พระองค์ในพระนิเวศน์ศักดิ์สิทธิ์แห่งนี้และทำเช่นเดียวกันนี้แทนบรรดาบรรพชนด้วย นี่ เป็นวันที่ทั้งสองค่านของม่านต่างชั้นขมยินดี

พระวิหารที่โรมานานแห่งนี้มาพร้อมกับศักราชใหม่ของการนมัสการที่มีพระคริสต์เป็น ศูนย์กลางในท้องถิ่นพระวิหารนี้ ขอให้การปรากฏของพระวิหารแห่งนี้แผ่ขยายความรัก ของพระผู้เป็นเจ้าและวิญญูณของพระกิตติคุณเข้าไปในชีวิตของบรรดาผู้มีขนบประเพณี ที่ยึดถือมายาวนานทั่วเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ ขอให้รัฐบาลทั้งหลายรุ่งเรืองขณะปกป้อง เสรีภาพทางศาสนาของศาสนาใหญ่่น้อยทั้งหลายต่อไป

ขอให้พระวิหารแห่งนี้เป็นสถานหลบภัยจากโลกและเต็มไปด้วยแสงสว่างที่ประทานมา จากฟ้าสวรรค์ ขณะนมัสการที่นี่ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายเป็นเหมือนพระองค์และพระ บุตรของพระองค์มากขึ้น รู้สึกถึงอิทธิพลอันหอมหวานของพระวิญญูณบริสุทธิ์และพร อันลึกซึ้งของการเปิดเผยส่วนตัว และเมื่อข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายมาพระวิหารพร้อมกับใจอัน หนักอึ้ง พร้อมกับความยากลำบากและการทดลอง ความทุกข์และความขัดสนทางโลก

และทางวิญญาณ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายได้รับการปลอบโยน การหนุนใจ และเปี่ยมด้วยปีติในการเดินทางของชีวิตและสัญญาของนิรันดรผ่านความเชื่อสัตย์ของพวกข้าพระองค์

ขอให้เยาวชนล้ำค่าของข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายไม่หลงไปตามปฏิบัติ แต่ชื่นชมยินดีในโอกาสที่ได้รับใช้บรรพชนในพระนิเวศน์ของพระองค์ ขอให้พวกเขาได้รับใช้ในพระวิหารตลอดชีวิต เพื่อพวกเขาจะถูกลำนำไปในวิถีอันชอบธรรมโดยการเลือกอย่างชอบธรรม เพื่อศาสนจักรจะเฟื่องฟูต่อไปในแผ่นดินที่อุดมด้วยพรแห่งนี้

บัดนี้ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายออกไปดำเนินชีวิตอย่างเชื่อตรงต่อพันธสัญญาที่ทำไว้ภายในกำแพงศักดิ์สิทธิ์นี้ ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายเข้ามานมัสการ ฟืนฟูจิตวิญญาณ และต่อพันธสัญญาศักดิ์สิทธิ์บ่อยๆ รักษาใจให้บริสุทธิ์และมีมือที่เต็มใจรับใช้พระองค์ตลอดไป ขอให้ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายคิดแบบซีเลสเชียล ให้พระวิญญาณของพระองค์ทรงมีชัยในชีวิตพวกข้าพระองค์ และพากเพียรเป็นผู้สร้างสันติตลอดเวลา

พระวิหารที่อุทิศแล้วแห่งนี้จะตั้งตระหง่านดั่งประกาศแห่งความหวังในพระเยซูคริสต์ และศรัทธาในแผนนิรันดรของพระองค์ ขอพระองค์ทรงยอมรับพระวิหารแห่งนี้เป็นพระนิเวศน์ของพระองค์ ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ดั่งที่พระองค์ทรงศักดิ์สิทธิ์ ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายขอมอบพระวิหารแห่งนี้ไว้ในพระหัตถ์ของพระองค์อันเป็นการแสดงถึงความภักดีต่อพระองค์ โปรดทรงเยี่ยมพระสรวล ประทานพระเมตตา และทรงยกข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายขึ้นในวันสุดท้าย ข้าพระองค์ทั้งหลายสวดอ้อนวอนอย่างนอบน้อมในพระนามที่รักยิ่งของพระเจ้าผู้ช่วยให้รอดและพระเจ้าผู้ไถ่ พระเยซูคริสต์ เอเมน

Dedicatory Prayer

Bangkok Thailand Temple

October 22, 2023

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Quorum of Twelve Apostles

O God, our Eternal Father, Thou great Elohim who liveth and reigneth over all the earth, whose eternal plan blesses all Thy children, we come before Thee in gratitude and humility to dedicate this magnificent Bangkok Thailand Temple. We express our deep appreciation for this, Thy Holy House, a sacred place of worship in this ancient land. May Thy children attending this temple, gain greater knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son.

We love Thee, Father, and thank Thee for the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. By Thy divine design, our Savior set in place the covenant path for us to follow, and by His Infinite Atonement, opened the gates of salvation for all generations and dispensations. We thank Thee for His ministry, His devotion, His teachings, and His great Atoning sacrifice.

We are grateful for the everlasting gospel restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. What a blessing to have it translated into many languages of this temple district. We thank Thee for our living Prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, and for those who serve with him in the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the councils of Thy Church.

Now, we come before Thee, at the direction of President Nelson, and by the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and in the office of the Holy Apostleship which I bear, we dedicate and consecrate this magnificent Bangkok Thailand Temple to Thee, Almighty God, and to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May this temple fulfill its blessed purpose, “holiness to the Lord,” and may it stand as a sentinel on earth of Thy eternal plan, separate and apart from the ways of the world. May all who come here, recommended to the Lord, be further enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel, the hope of life eternal, and Thy promised peace.

We ask Thee to bless the land and the beautiful adjacent building including the chapels, patron housing, mission facilities, and other areas of this temple. We dedicate the baptistry, the areas for initiatory ordinances, the endowment and sealing rooms, the holy altars, and the celestial room. Wilt Thou watch over the foundation, exterior structure and distinctive spires, the floors, walls, doors, furnishings, and mechanical systems. Protect this structure from natural disasters, from hostile, or disruptive actions

that may harm this hallowed ground, and pour down blessings upon the artisans, craftsmen, and laborers whose best work is displayed in this beautiful temple.

We ask Thee to bless all who serve in this temple, including the temple president and his counselors, the matron and her assistants, temple workers, volunteers, and employees.

This will be the 185th dedicated, operating temple in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We appreciate the tithes of faithful Saints around the world who made possible its construction. May we show our gratitude in being faithful in our tithes and offerings. May we, Thy children, commit ourselves by covenant to Thee in this holy house and do the same on behalf of our ancestors. This is a day of rejoicing on both sides of the veil.

With this long-awaited temple comes a new era of Christ-centered worship in this temple district. May the very presence of this temple spread the love of God and the spirit of the gospel into the lives of those with long-held customs and traditions across Southeast Asia. May governments prosper as they continue to protect the religious liberties of all faiths, large and small.

May this temple be a sanctuary from the world filled with the light bestowed by the heavens. As we worship here may we become more like Thee and Thy Son, may we feel the sweet influence of the Holy Ghost and the profound blessings of personal revelation. And when we come to the temple with heavy hearts, with hardships and trials, temporal and spiritual afflictions and needs, may we be comforted, lifted, and filled with joy in the journey of life and the promise of eternity through our faithfulness.

May our precious youth not be distracted by the adversary but rejoice in the opportunity to serve ancestors in Thy House. May they continue temple service throughout their lives, that they may be directed in a righteous course by righteous choices, that the Church will continue to flourish in this richly blessed land.

Now, may we go forth to live true to the covenants made within these sacred walls. May we attend often to worship and renew our souls and sacred covenants, may we keep our hearts pure and our hands ever willing to serve Thee. May we think celestial, letting thy spirit prevail in our lives, and strive to be peacemakers always.

This dedicated temple will stand as a beacon of hope in Jesus Christ, and faith in Thy eternal plan. Wilt Thou accept it as Thy house, holy as Thou art holy. We gratefully place it in Thy hands as a manifestation of our devotion to Thee. Smile upon us, favor us with Thy mercy, and lift us up at the last day, we humbly pray in the beloved name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Rasband spoke of his Dedication of the Thailand Bangkok Temple at the April Conference 2024

Elder Rasband said,

Last October my wife, Melanie, and I were in Bangkok, Thailand, as I was preparing to dedicate what would be the Church's 185th temple. For me, the assignment was both surreal and humbling. This was the first temple on the Southeast Asia peninsula. It was masterfully designed—a six-story, nine-spined structure, “fitly framed” to be a house of the Lord. For months I had contemplated the dedication. What had settled in my soul and mind was that the country and the temple had been cradled in the arms of prophets and apostles. President Thomas S. Monson had announced the temple and President Nelson the dedication.

I had prepared the dedicatory prayer months earlier. Those sacred words had been translated into 12 languages. We were ready. Or so I thought.

The night before the dedication, I was awakened from my sleep with an unsettled, urgent feeling about the dedicatory prayer. I tried to set aside the prompting, thinking the prayer was in place. But the Spirit would not leave me alone. I sensed certain words were missing, and by divine design they came to me in revelation, and I inserted these words in the prayer near the end: “May we think celestial, letting Thy Spirit prevail in our lives, and strive to be peacemakers always.” The Lord was reminding me to heed the words of our living prophet: “Think celestial,” “let the Spirit prevail,” “strive to be peacemakers.” Words of the prophet matter to the Lord and to us.

Recognition of a New Landmark in Bangkok

Some months after the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, the Metropolitan Rapid Transit (MRT) in Bangkok changed the subway system's signage at the Phetchaburi Station to include the Bangkok Thailand Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Photo 18 - The new signage recognized the Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ. Yes, adding "of Latter-day Saints" in English and Thai took too many characters.

Section 2

Index for Newspaper Articles

1. The Nation – 08/11/2023 - An English Newspaper printed in Bangkok – “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announces Open House for the Bangkok Thailand Temple”¹
2. The Salt Lake Tribune – 08/28/2023 - “Why this Latter-day Temple will Stand Out” Copyright ©2023 by the Salt Lake Tribune. Used by permission.²

¹ Thailand's copyright laws allow the use of newspaper articles if no fees are required to view the content.

² Email authorizing use from Lauren Gustas, CEO and Executive Editor, Salt Lake Tribune, received 7/11/2023.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announces open house for Bangkok Thailand Temple

From “The Nation,” an English Language Newspaper in Bangkok



FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2023

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invites the public to celebrate the completion of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, the first temple of its kind in Thailand and the third in Southeast Asia.

A press conference on August 28 will be followed by three days of invited guest tours. The general public can book free guided tours from September 1-16, excluding Sundays at BangkokTemple.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Once dedicated, temples are open to faithful Church members. The public open house presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the wider public, regardless of faith, to enter. This unique invitation aligns with the Church's desire for community understanding and inclusivity.



Elder Suchat Chaichana, an Area Seventy of the Church in Thailand

Elder **Suchat Chaichana**, an **Area Seventy** or senior leader of the Church in Thailand said:

"The **Bangkok Thailand Temple** is a testament to the enduring faith of over 23,000 members of the Church in Thailand and will serve as a focal point of spiritual growth for many years to come. It's more than a building; it's a sacred space that symbolizes our commitment to the teachings of **Jesus Christ** and the eternal nature of families."

"We invite you to come, learn, and walk with us in our holiest space in all of Thailand. Experience our impression of heaven on earth and the special feelings that exist in the temple. Our members invite everyone to share the joy we feel in the House of the Lord in Thailand. We remain

ever-committed to encouraging understanding of the Church in the community and opening our arms to those who wish to learn more."

The Church has been a part of Thailand's religious landscape since 1854, witnessing considerable growth since the 1960s. The Bangkok Thailand Temple signifies a new milestone in strengthening the faith of Church members in Thailand and the surrounding region. For many years, Church members in Thailand needed to go to **Hong Kong**, **Taiwan** or other places for temple worship. For some, the cost required only allowed them to visit a temple once in their lifetime.

As the Church's 185th operating temple, the Bangkok Thailand Temple will represent the culmination of a project announced by then Church President **Thomas S. Monson** in April 2015, followed by a groundbreaking

ceremony in January 2019. Located at 1645/6 **New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan, Ratchathewi** District, the temple site is conveniently located in a residential and business area in the heart of Bangkok and near the Makkasan transit station linked with the **Bangkok Airport Rail Link**.

The design of the Bangkok Thailand Temple has been carefully created to represent the synergies between Thai culture and that of the Church, where temple worship can play a significant role.

The Bangkok Thailand Temple's 48,525 square-foot building reflects the unique aspects of Thai architecture, which includes lotus flower elements, an interlocking octagonal pattern on its art glass, and nine spires that blend seamlessly with the heavens above.

With a combination of screened spires and windows, the building forms a distinctive silhouette against the Bangkok skyline, signifying the temple's role as a beacon of faith for the community.

Following the open house period, the Bangkok Thailand Temple will be operational after its dedication on October 22. The dedication is a special ceremony to signify the temple's consecration to the work of God. The dedication event includes worshipful music, talks from Church leaders, and a dedicatory prayer, setting the building aside for Church use and seeking divine blessings upon the structure and its grounds.

Sathit Kaivalvatana, a member of the Open House Committee added: "For Church members, temples are considered the holiest places on earth, where they can draw closer to God and receive eternal blessings. This temple's dedication symbolizes the continued global growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its commitment to bringing light and hope to communities worldwide."

Why this Latter-day Saint temple will stand out

It will be the Utah-based church's only one in the "Land of Smiles."

From the Salt Lake Tribune



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Thailand's Bangkok Temple.

By Peggy Fletcher Stack

Aug. 28, 2023, 10:31 a.m.

A new temple has been added to Bangkok's stunning golden skyline, but its spires are not Buddhist.

This new sacred structure in the nation, nicknamed the "[Land of Smiles](#)," belongs to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is opening to the public this week.

Exhilaration for their temple among the country's [23,450 Latter-day Saints in more than 40 congregations](#) is palpable.

“The members are so excited,” says Hannah Phanich, who returned in February to Salt Lake City from her 18-month mission there. “There is a hotel next to the temple site, and members have been going there for months taking photos of the construction from higher floors.”

Missionaries have been helping folks “get ready,” says Phanich, whose father is Thai. “Some members have been ‘called’ to do history and serve as ‘temple coordinators.’ They were very passionate about what they did and so good at getting people excited.”

Open house begins

Invited guests will be touring the Bangkok Temple through Thursday.

Starting on Friday and continuing through Sept. 16, the general public will be welcomed inside the multistory, 48,525-square-foot building with a central spire that soars some 250 feet.

“It’s a beautiful building in a remarkably beautiful city, but it’s much more than just a building,” said apostle Gerrit Gong, who is in Bangkok for the beginning of the open house, said in a news release Monday. “We offer the best we can to the Lord, and he offers the best he can for us. This is the place where heaven and earth connect.”

Fellow apostle Ronald Rasband is scheduled to dedicate the temple Oct. 22.

Scores of other former missionaries to the Southeast Asian nation of 71 million people from the past 60-plus years plan to return for the [Sept. 1-16 open house](#) or the [Oct. 22 dedication](#).

“I don’t think you can go to Thailand,” says [Jacob Newman](#), who served mostly in Bangkok from 2009 to 2011, “and not be transformed by the sense of the sacred all around.”

Newman, a Millcreek resident who is already there for the open house, “grew to love the people so much,” he says. “When my stake [regional] president asked me, ‘Did you learn to love the people?’, I just cried.”

To Reed Haslam, a Sandy resident who served in Thailand from 1973 to 1975 and wrote a book titled “[The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia](#),” the Thai people were “so kind and generous.”

More, he says, “than I could have imagined.”



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Celestial Room in the Bangkok Temple.

There was a time, though, when Mormonism faced an unexpected international outcry that threatened to thwart its growth in the country — just as it was getting started.

Painful lesson in cultural sensitivity

Latter-day Saint apostle [Gordon B. Hinckley](#) (who would become the faith's 15th president) [dedicated Thailand](#) for missionary work in 1966. Missionaries didn't arrive until two years later, when six were sent from the Hong Kong Mission, which included Taiwan.

The Utah-based faith then began to expand in the country, with congregations emerging in Bangkok and surrounding areas. The missionaries needed to understand the culture of the Thai people, but they had been taught just the basics of the Thai language. To be effective in sharing the gospel, they needed to know both. It was not until after 1972 that the church started to teach both to new missionaries bound for foreign countries like Thailand.



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Thailand's Bangkok Temple.

Alpine resident Mary Schnitker Gifford arrived in Thailand in 1975, possibly “the fourth or fifth proselytizing ‘sisters’ [women].”

At that time, the missionaries only had portions of the faith’s foundational scripture, [the Book of Mormon](#), to use with their efforts. But a year later, the whole volume was published in Thai.

“We expected it would break the work wide open, but it didn’t,” Gifford recalls. “Things slogged along.”

Three major developments were needed, she says, to “hasten the work.”

- First, the mission needed a president who spoke Thai, and they didn’t get one until 1988.
- Second, the church had to solve “the visa problem,” which required missionaries to

leave the country every 90 days to renew their visas. “It took up to five days and was very disruptive to the work,” Gifford says, “considering the few investigators we had.”

- Third, it would be best to have its own chapels, rather than meeting in homes.

How to ‘hasten the work’



(Sakchai Lalit | AP) In this Feb. 7, 2020, photo, tourists take a selfie with the statue of a giant Buddha at Wat Pho in Bangkok, Thailand.

“I’m amazed that the church has grown in Thailand,” Gifford says. “There are thriving units in towns that weren’t even open in 1977. We have many chapels. The visa problem is solved, and we have a supply of Thai-speaking mission presidents.”

And now there will be an even more visible presence: a temple.

Challenges of Buddhism



(Thailand's Royal Public Relation Department via AP) In this photo released by Thailand's Royal Public Relations Department, Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn is transported on the royal palanquin by royal bearers during his visit to the Temple of the Emerald Buddhism in 2019 in Bangkok. Buddhist beliefs can be an obstacle for Latter-day Saint missionaries as they seek potential converts.

A common Thai response to Latter-day Saint conversion attempts was “well, every religion teaches you to be good.”

As innocuous and broad-minded as that sounds, “it was an extremely effective means of deflecting any attempts to discuss religion,” says Shane Strate, who was a missionary there from 1992 to 1994. “If all religions promoted moral behavior, then what was the point of converting to a foreign religion? Better to stay with the religion that promoted connections to family, society, nation and monarchy.”

Many Thais “were impressed with the Book of Mormon, believed [church founder] [Joseph Smith](#) to be called of God, and even accepted our claims that our church was ‘true,’” Strate says. “Yet when we invited them to accept baptism, they responded, ‘Oh no, I’m a Buddhist. That’s the correct religion for Thai people.’”



(Courtesy of Shane Strate) Shane Strate, an associate professor of history at Kent State University, served his Latter-day Saint mission in Thailand.

Plus, the concept of deity is “radically different” between the two faiths, says Strate, who teaches courses on Thailand and Southeast Asia at Ohio’s [Kent State University](#).

During a lesson about the Latter-day Saint view of the afterlife with its [three kingdoms](#), a potential convert looked pensive for a moment, then said, “Can I just go to the middle one?”

Strate tried to communicate that the Celestial Kingdom — the “highest” heaven — should be the goal in order to “reside with God.” The young man sat back and said, “No, I think that’s too much for me.”

The Buddhist pictured God the way Hindus conceived of Brahma or Shiva, or the ancient Greeks imagined Zeus or Athena, the former missionary says. “To reside with such a deity would be a precarious existence, since one risked invoking their wrath through some act of carelessness.”

Is it any wonder, Strate asks, he would prefer “the middle one”?



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) The courtyard with a reflecting pond and Christ statue at the Bangkok Temple.



(Sakchai Lalit | AP) This Sept. 12, 2017, photo, shows the royal crematorium and funeral complex for the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej in preparation in Bangkok.

Social obstacles

Almost all young Thai men were expected to enter a monastery and reside as a novice monk for a period of several weeks. This act, the history professor says, would generate “enormous quantities of spiritual merit necessary to ensure his parents achieved a satisfactory level of salvation.”

If they chose Latter-day Saint baptism instead, they would be viewed “as selfish and unfeeling, having deprived his parents of the merit necessary in the afterlife,” Strate says. “This would be a cause of great shame for his family within their community.”

Occasionally, he adds, the missionaries found young men who said they would accept baptism “once they had entered the monastery and fulfilled their filial obligation.”

But few did.



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Thailand's Bangkok Temple.

Missionary success

Early missionaries formed a singing group and toured the country, attracting large crowds and eventually performing for the king and queen, says Salt Lake City resident Steve Elliott, who was there in the 1970s.

Elliott, who became a professional golfer, played his sport as a missionary there, tapping into Thai interest in Latter-day Saint golfer [Johnny Miller](#).

Street displays on the dangers of smoking and drinking attracted some, he says, as well as missionary basketball teams that played across the country.

St. Louis resident Dana King, who has a degree in Asian studies, and her husband, Daniel King, lived in Bangkok from 1992 to 1998, while he received his doctorate in Thai political parties. He was the president of the English-speaking Latter-day Saint branch (small congregation), while [she ran the church's "Journey to Bethlehem,"](#) a Christmas program that attracted many people from the community.

"There was a lot of curiosity about Christianity," King says. "We had large turnouts every year, filling up the parking lot."



(Courtesy of Dana King) Dana King enjoys time with daughter Rey in Bangkok, Thailand, in the 1990s.

The church also has been involved in humanitarian projects in the Southeast Asian country for many years — providing wheelchairs, cataract surgical units, computers, clean water projects and cash donations through nonprofits. It offered major assistance after the 2011 tsunami.

Haslam, the author, says a Latter-day Saint temple in Thailand was a faraway dream during the struggles of past decades. "We couldn't imagine it."

And now he — and so many others — will be there to celebrate.



(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Anan Eldredge, shown on Aug. 23, 2023, was the first Thai member baptized in 1967, months before the first missionaries arrived in Bangkok. He was also the first Thai missionary and first Thai mission president. "This is my dream," he says, "to see the House of the Lord, the temple, here in Thailand."

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Groundbreaking Announced for Thailand's First Temple



Photo 1: Rendering of the Bangkok Thailand Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with Angel Moroni

By Marianne Holman Prescott

Construction for Thailand's first temple will officially commence at the beginning of next year after a groundbreaking ceremony to be held on Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019.

President Thomas S. Monson announced the Bangkok Thailand Temple during the general conference on April 5, 2015, and now, more than three years later, construction will begin.

“Attendance at the site will be by invitation only,” according to a letter from the First Presidency dated Nov. 21, 2018. “It is anticipated that the services will be transmitted via the Internet to stake centers within the proposed temple district.”

Elder David F. Evans, General Authority Seventy and Asia Area president, will preside at the ceremony, which will be transmitted to Church members living in Thailand and other nearby countries.

“We look forward to the start of construction on the Bangkok Thailand Temple,” according to the letter.

There are more than 22,000 members living in Thailand within four stakes made up of 42 congregations. Once the temple is complete, a public open house will take place and a dedication date will be announced.

The event will be held at the temple site — 1645/6 New Phetchburi Road Makkasan, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 Thailand.

Although the first missionary to visit Thailand was as early as 1854, it wasn't until 1966 when the first Thailand District was created. Families had been holding informal services in the 1950s and 1960s. Then-Elder Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the country for the preaching of the gospel on Nov. 2, 1966, and missionaries were then transferred to the area.

Since that time, Church membership has continued to grow. Thailand became its own mission in 1973, and only one year later the first meetinghouse was dedicated by Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In 1995, the Bangkok Stake was created.

Church Leaders Break Ground for Temple in Bangkok

By Marianne Holman Prescott

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints broke ground for its first temple in Thailand Saturday, January 26, 2019. Elder Robert C. Gay of the Presidency of the Seventy presided and, along with Church and local community leaders, participated in the ceremony with 700 members of the Church. Many others joined via broadcast in Church meetinghouses throughout the country.

The groundbreaking took place at the temple site on 1645/6 New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan in the Ratchathewi District, which is in the center of a residential and business area in Bangkok.

“My heart is filled with joy and gratitude to be here today,” Elder Gay said. “Because of the faithfulness of the Saints in Thailand, a house of the Lord will soon be built in this country and many will have the opportunity to participate in temple worship with their family and partake of the eternal blessings that come with it.”

He was joined by Elder David F. Evans, president of the Asia Area, who also offered remarks and the dedicatory prayer. Other senior Church leaders included Elder Peter F. Meurs and Elder David P. Homer, members of the Asia Area Presidency, as well as Elder Wisit Khanakham, an Area Seventy.

“Today was a historic day for the Church in Thailand,” Elder Evans said. “For more than 50 years, the faithful Saints in Thailand have waited and prayed for this day. The construction and ultimate completion of the temple will become a blessing for not only the members of the Church but also for all who see the



Photo 1 - Groundbreaking

beauty of the temple and feel of the peace that will be found on this sacred ground.”



Photo 2 - Artistic Rendering of the new Temple

Also in attendance were former Thailand ambassador to the United States His Excellency Sakthip Krairiksh and his wife, M.R. (Lady) Benchapa; former mayor of Bangkok Dr. Bhichit Rattaku; and other dignitaries.

The Church will build a majestic 44,405-square-foot, six-story temple with multiple spires reaching heavenward. It will be a place of beauty and peace where all can come.

In addition to the temple, a 91,370-square-foot building will feature two religious meetinghouses, seminary and institute

facilities, Church offices and housing. Substantial underground parking is also planned at the site.

Latter-day Saint temples differ from the Church's meetinghouses or chapels where members meet for Sunday worship services.

Temples are considered "houses of the Lord" where Christ's teachings are reaffirmed through marriage and other ordinances that unite families for eternity. In the temple, Church members learn more about the purpose of life and strengthen their commitment to serve Jesus Christ and those around them.

Sister Wipharat Uanphoklang also offered remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony. She and her husband live faithfully as they raise their three sons in the gospel. Like many other Thai members of the Church, they look forward to receiving temple blessings in their own country.

"We have long prayed for a temple in Thailand," Sister Uanphoklang said. "We are grateful that each of our children will have the blessing of receiving their temple ordinances and being sealed when they go on missions and marry. The temple gives us joy and hope as we seek to teach our children and help them feel of God's love for them."

Today, there are more than 22,000 Latter-day Saints in Thailand, organized in 42 congregations. This temple will serve Church members in Thailand and other nearby countries.

There are currently 201 temples throughout the world either in operation, under construction or announced.

Open house dates will be announced, and public tours conducted after construction of the Bangkok Thailand Temple is completed. A date for dedication will also be announced.



Photo 3 - The temple lot ready for groundbreaking



Photo 4 - Gold Shovels are ready



Photo 5 -The shovels await the end of the program



*Photo 6 - Elder Gay visits with members and dignitaries.
Brother Suchat Chaichana stands by.*



Photo 7 - Members and Dignitaries seated in the front row.



Photo 8- Elder Wisit Khanakham Area Authority Seventy conducts.



Photo 9 - Sister Wipharat Uanphoklang speaks.



Photo 10 – Elder Gay speaks with the Interpreter.



Photo 11 - Groundbreaking Choir



Photo 12 - Audience as seen from the rear.



Photo 13 - Elder David F. Evans, General Authority Seventy, speaks with the Interpreter.



Photo 14– Attention! We are about to break ground.



Photo 15

Dedication, open house dates announced for Bangkok Thailand Temple

Elder Rasband to dedicate the first temple not only in Thailand but on the Southeastern Asia mainland.

By Christine Rappleye

27 March 2023, 2:10 PM MDT



Photo 1 -Rendering of the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has announced the dedication and open house dates for the Bangkok Thailand Temple, not only the first temple dedicated in Thailand but the first for mainland Southeast Asia.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will preside and dedicate the temple in two sessions — at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. — on Sunday, Oct. 22.

The dedicatory sessions will be broadcast to all units in the Bangkok Thailand Temple district.

The public open house will run from Friday, Sept. 1, through Saturday, Sept. 16, excluding Sundays. Prior to the open house, a media day will be Monday, Aug. 28, with invited guests touring from Tuesday, Aug. 29, through Thursday, Aug. 31.

The announcement of the dedication and open house was published Monday, March 27, on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. The First Presidency also announced the groundbreaking dates for three new temples and released the rendering for the Cody Wyoming Temple.



Photo 2 -Church and civic leaders break ground for the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019. The temple will be at 1645/6 New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan, in the Ratchathewi District, which is in the center of a residential and business area in Bangkok.

President Russell M. Nelson and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Bangkok, including the future temple site, in April 2018 as part of President Nelson’s inaugural worldwide ministry.

President Nelson said the Latter-day Saints of Thailand will not be passive.

“These people are energized. They are inspired. They want to do something about their faith,” he said. “They are going to get ready for their temple.”



Photo 3: President Russell M. Nelson; his wife, Sister Wendy Nelson; Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; and Sister Patricia Holland tour the Church site to be used for a temple in Bangkok, Thailand, on Friday, April 20, 2018

The 44,405-square-foot, six-story temple featuring multiple spires is at 1645/6 New Phetchburi Road Makkasan, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 Thailand. Additionally, a 91,370-square-foot building will feature two meetinghouses, seminary and institute facilities, Church offices and patron housing.

The temple has been built in front of the Makkasan transit station linked with Bangkok Airport Rail Link, allowing access for travelers coming from the Suvarnabhumi Airport. The temple site was previously home to a Church office building, used for the Bangkok Thailand Mission, the Bangkok Service Center, the Bangkok Thailand Perpetual Education Fund Self Reliance Center and other Church entities.

The first Latter-day Saint missionary arrived in Thailand in 1854, but more than a century passed before missionary work began in earnest in the 1960s and the first meetinghouse was dedicated in 1974.

Known as the “Land of Smiles,” Thailand today is home to more than 23,000 Latter-day Saints in 40 congregations. The Bangkok temple will serve Latter-day Saints in Thailand and nearby countries. Currently, the closest operating temple for Church members in Thailand is the Hong Kong Temple.

See interior, exterior photos of the Bangkok Thailand Temple as Elder Gong welcomes media-day guests

An Apostle welcomes participants to the opening events for what will be the Church's 185th dedicated house of the Lord.

28 Aug 2023, 8:43 AM MDT

By Scott Taylor

With an Apostle providing a welcoming message and leading tours of media representatives, the Bangkok Thailand Temple has become the latest house of the Lord of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to open its doors to the public.

Joined by other Church leaders and past and current Bangkok civic leaders, Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles greeted attendees at the temple's Monday, Aug. 28, media day events, which began with a news conference and was followed by a tour of the temple and media interviews.

"It's a beautiful building in a remarkably beautiful city, but it's much more than just a building," said Elder Gong, who first visited the southeast Asia nation in 1980 with his wife, Sister Susan Gong. "We offer the best we can to the Lord, and He offers the best He can for us. This is the place where heaven and earth connect. It allows us to tie to our ancestors, our families, to make forever families."

Monday's media day kicks off a series of special-guest tours that will continue daily until the temple's public open-house tours begin Friday, Sept. 1, and continue through Saturday, Sept. 17, excluding Sundays.



Photo 1: The Bangkok Thailand Temple. It is a very vertical temple.

As is the pattern with media days, the Church released interior and exterior photos of the Bangkok Thailand Temple and a video on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

When dedicated this fall, the Bangkok Thailand Temple will be the Church's 185th operating house of the Lord around the globe.

Core beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ

In welcoming the media and guests before tours inside the temple, Elder Gong explained that Latter-day Saints believe in God, seek to create strong families and be good citizens.



Photo 2: The front reception area and temple recommend desk inside the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

“As good neighbors and good friends, we seek to be compassionate, kind and generous,” he said. “We help the poor and needy. For instance, we respond quickly when floods, natural disasters, or other community needs arise.

The Apostle singled out the Church's many years of work with the Royal Patronage Foundation of Thailand and cited some examples of humanitarian efforts.

“Our humanitarian service, training and assistance provide wheelchairs for the mobility impaired; neonatal training to help health care professionals save infants at risk; and

needed water and wells in rural areas,” Elder Gong said. “Of course, no one group can do everything needed, but we can each do our small part.”

Others speaking Monday included Elder Suchat Chaichana, Area Seventy from Bangkok; Bhichit Rattakul, former governor of Bangkok and graduate of Brigham Young University; and Gov. Chadchart Sittipunt, the governor of Bangkok.



Photo 3: The celestial room of the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

Also attending the news conference and available for media interviews after the tour were four General Authority Seventies: Elder Kevin R. Duncan, executive director of the

Church's Temple Department; Elder James R. Rasband, on assignment for the Temple Department; Elder Benjamin M.Z. Tai, Asia Area president; and Elder Kelly R. Johnson, a counselor in the Asia Area presidency.

Bangkok Thailand Temple background



Photo 4: The front entrance to the Bangkok Thailand Temple, with “Holiness to the Lord. House of the Lord” inscribed in Thai above the door. Photo taken summer 2023.

The late President Thomas S. Monson announced a temple for Bangkok, Thailand, during April 2015 general conference.

Construction began promptly following a Jan. 26, 2019, groundbreaking ceremony, with Elder Robert C. Gay of the Presidency of the Seventy presiding and Elder David F. Evans a General Authority Seventy offering the dedicatory prayer on the site and the construction process.

Church President Russell M. Nelson and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Bangkok, including the future temple site, in April 2018 as part of President Nelson’s inaugural global ministry.

President Nelson said the Latter-day Saints of Thailand will not be passive.

“These people are energized. They are inspired. They want to do something about their faith,” he said. “They are going to get ready for their temple.”



Photo 5: The bride’s room of the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will preside and dedicate the temple in two sessions — at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. — on Sunday, Oct. 22. The dedicatory sessions will be broadcast to all units in the Bangkok Thailand Temple district, which includes Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia. Currently, the closest operating temple for Church members in Thailand is the Hong Kong China Temple.

Bangkok Thailand Temple Features

The Bangkok Thailand Temple — a 48,525-square-foot, six-story edifice featuring nine spires — is at 1645/6 New Phetchburi Road Makkasan, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400. Additionally, a 91,370-square-foot building will feature two chapels, meeting rooms, seminary and institute facilities, Church offices, patron housing and a FamilySearch center.



Photo 6: The Bangkok Thailand Temple at night surrounded by skyscrapers in Bangkok, Thailand, in the summer of 2023.

The temple has been built in front of the Makkasan transit station, where the Bangkok Airport Rail Link operates, allowing access for travelers coming from the Suvarnabhumi Airport. The temple site was previously home to a Church office building, used for the Bangkok Thailand Mission, the Bangkok Service Center, the Bangkok Thailand Perpetual Education Fund Self Reliance Center and other Church entities.

The temple's design follows the patterns and colors commonly found in Thai architecture, including diamond shapes with lotus flower elements and a herringbone pattern, the latter evoking the weaved palms used in traditional arts and goods. With its screened spires and windows, the temple serves as a fitting addition to the Bangkok skyline.

The building is a cast-in-place concrete structure with a precast concrete skin. The nine spires of varying sizes — cast in glass fiber-reinforced concrete — each is capped with a perforated decorative screen designed to blend with the heavens above during the day and offer a glowing ember at night.

The exterior art glass reflects the decorative screens that are a common design element throughout Asia. The outer layer of the exterior art glass features a silk-screened, interlocking octagonal pattern, with the inner layer employing the same pattern with frosted carved glass and border of amber, gold and teal.

Water features are found on the property around the temple as well as in the courtyard plaza, and trees, shrubs and perennials were carefully selected to beautify and soften the temple grounds.

The south fence repeats the geometric pattern found on the spires and in the art glass, while patterns in the plazas reflect the lotus design of the temple's façade.

Inside the temple, flooring features carpeting and stone flooring, the latter being marble quarried in Egypt and laid in a herringbone pattern.

The decorative lighting fixtures are inspired by royal sun umbrellas; however, the function is inverse, since they radiate light rather than provide shade.



Photo: 7 - The front of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, as seen through the front gate. The front gate is normally closed. Patrons generally enter through the driveway to the underground parking.



Photo 8: Molding and woodwork in the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

The millwork carvings in the columns in the celestial and sealing rooms feature Ratchaphruek tree flowers, Thailand's national flower. The door hardware is machine-milled bronze; those with a lever handle have a lotus flower motif.

The Church's history in Thailand

In 1852, Brigham Young called four missionaries to serve in Thailand, which was then known as Siam. Only one eventually made it, but not arriving until 1854 and staying only four months because of the language barrier. Only one missionary made it to Thailand. He was Elder Elam Luddington.

Member families living in Bangkok in the 1950s began to hold informal and infrequent meetings, until the Church authorized regular worship services for a small, English-speaking congregation in 1961, which has been functioning since.

In 1966, the Church organized the Thailand District, with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley dedicating Thailand for the preaching of the gospel in November of that year, done in a brief service in Lumpini Park in the heart of Bangkok.



Photo 9: The baptismal font in the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

In 1973, a mission for Thailand was created. The following year, the first chapel in the country was dedicated — in Bangkok — with chapels being built in other cities across Thailand over the next two decades.

The Bangkok Thailand Stake was organized in 1995, with a second stake in the city created in 2014 and a third two years later.

Church membership in Thailand now exceeds 23,000 in more than 40 congregations, with meetinghouses throughout Bangkok and in most large urban centers in the country, including Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, Udon Thani and Ubon Rachathani.



Photo 10: The Bangkok Thailand Temple is surrounded by skyscrapers in Bangkok, Thailand. The building to the left of the temple is the multipurpose building.

Bangkok Thailand Temple Facts

Location: 1645/6 New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan, Ratch Bangkok 10400 Thailand.

Announced: April 5, 2015, by President Thomas S. Monson

Groundbreaking: Jan. 26, 2019, with Elder Robert C. Gay of the Presidency of the Seventy presiding and Elder David F. Evans offering the prayer of

Construction Start: Later in 2019.

Public open house: Friday, Sept. 1 through Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023, excluding Sundays.

Dedication: Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023, by Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in two sessions, 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Property size: 1.77 acres.

Building size: 48,525 square feet.

Building height: 242 feet, including the spire.

Additional interior, and Exterior photos



Photo 11: The Bangkok Thailand Temple at dusk surrounded by skyscrapers in Bangkok, Thailand, in the summer of 2023.



Photo 12: Waiting room in the Bangkok Thailand Temple, adjacent to the recommend desk.



Photo 13: The celestial room in the Bangkok Thailand Temple.



Photo 14: The bride's room in the Bangkok Thailand Temple.



Photo: 15: A hallway in the Bangkok Thailand Temple.



Photo 16: Stairwell of the Bangkok Thailand Temple extends from the first floor to the fourth floor.

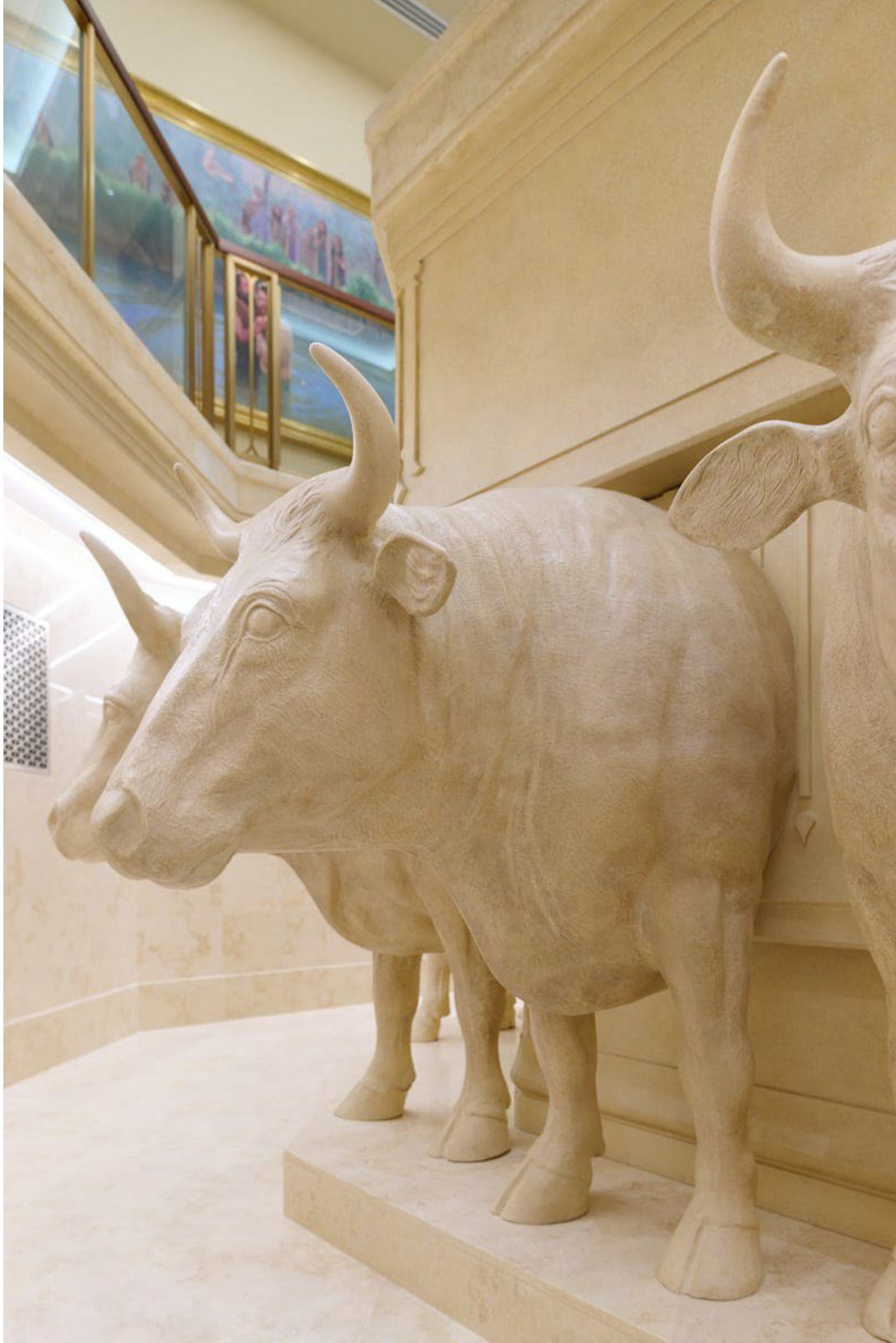


Photo 17 - A detailed image of the 12 oxen at the base of the baptismal font in the Bangkok Thailand Temple



Photo 18: Front entrance of the Bangkok Thailand Temple in Bangkok, Thailand, in summer 2023



Photo: 19: The courtyard with a Christus statue at the Bangkok Thailand Temple, in the summer of 2023. The building in back is the auxiliary building housing several church offices, two chapels with classrooms, patron housing, and apartments for mission presidents and other senior missionaries. The auxiliary building is roughly twice the size of the temple.

YSAs in Thailand invite and share Bangkok temple open house

More than 375 young single adults meet with Elder and Sister Gong in devotional prior to Aug. 26 tour of the new house of the Lord.

29 Aug 2023, 12:32 PM MDT



Photo 1: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023. | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

By Scott Taylor

More than 375 Thai young single adults from Bangkok and across Thailand gathered at the Bangkok Thailand Temple to walk through the House of the Lord, then share photos, impressions, and testimonies, and invite families and friends to the temple open house on social media.

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, met with the participating YSAs in a devotional in the stake center next to the temple. As the young single adults prepared to enter the temple, Elder Gong expressed his hope that they would have a spiritual experience.



Photo 2: More than 375 young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, Aug. 26, 2023. | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

“The Lord is waiting to meet you in His holy house,” the Apostle said. “We don’t go to the temple. We come to Jesus Christ in the house of the Lord.”

Held Monday, Aug. 28, [the temple’s media day](#) kicked off a series of special-guest tours that will continue daily until the public open-house tours begin Friday, Sept. 1, and continue through Saturday, Sept. 17, excluding Sundays.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will dedicate the Bangkok Thailand Temple in two sessions — at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. — on Sunday, Oct.

22. The dedicatory sessions will be broadcast to all units in the Bangkok Thailand Temple district, which includes Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia. Currently, the closest operating temple for Church members in Thailand is the Hong Kong China Temple.



Photo 3: The Bangkok Thailand Temple at night, photographed in the summer of 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand.

What the Gongs taught in Thailand

Elder Gong quoted President Russell M. Nelson, who said, “Everything we believe, and every promise God has made to His covenant people come together in the temple.”

The Gongs were young adults themselves when they first visited Thailand in 1980 — on their honeymoon after their marriage. And they have returned a number of times since, including a time a decade ago that Sister Gong recalled during the devotional.

“Ten years ago, Elder Gong and I were here in Thailand, and we just felt that the blessings of God were ready to be poured out upon the people,” Sister Gong said. “And it’s happening. A temple is such a beautiful thing to have right here in the middle of Bangkok. It will be a light to the world. I am grateful for your goodness and sacrifice, which helped make it possible.”



Photo 4: Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speaks to a gathering of young single adults from across Thailand prior to touring the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.

Elder Gong said “peace,” “purity” and “purpose” are three words that describe what the temple means to him. “Peace is something that we’re all seeking,” he explained. “Purity is something that we value. And we are looking for purpose.”

The Apostle invited the young adults to share the three words they would use to describe the temple through social media and other opportunities.

What the YSAs were saying

Jeeranan Sawasdeenaruemon said her three words — as invited by Elder Gong — are “holiness,” “family” and “eternity,” adding she knows “that through the temple, families can be together forever. ... I feel that the temple is really the house of God and He was there.”

After walking through the temple, Pariwat Sengpoung of Rangsit, Thailand, said: “I feel closer with God, and Jesus really [is] closer.”

Suchawadee Prasithichai of Bang Khen, a district of Bangkok, said: “This is my first time to see Elder Gong. This is my special day. And I learned a lot about him.”

Surakrit Cherdchaiyaphum, also of Rangsit, said: “I [would] really like to invite everyone to come and to see what we have and what Jesus Christ wants us to know.”



Photo 5: Sister Susan Gong, wife of Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, speaks to a gathering of more than 375 young single adults from across Thailand in Bangkok on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 6: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023. | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Photo 7: Thai young single adults pose for a photo outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple. YSAs from across Thailand gathered for a devotional with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, prior to touring the temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 8: A young woman takes a selfie with Sister Susan Gong, with Elder Gerrit W. Gong in the background, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 9: Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles greets a Thai young single adult in the courtyard plaza of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 10: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 11: Young single adults gather for a photo prior to a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 12: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo prior to a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023. | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Photo 13: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023. | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Photo 14: A young single adult takes a selfie with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 15: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a devotional with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, prior to a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.



Photo 16: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a devotional with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, prior to a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.

How the Bangkok Temple Stands on the Foundation of Six Decades of the Church in Thailand and Multigenerational Members

Temple dedication brings focus on missionary work and conversion in the '60s and '70s as well as the future generations of Thai Latter-day Saints.

21 Oct 2023, 4:14 PM MDT

By Scott Taylor

Photo Credits: Scott G Winterton, Deseret News (unless otherwise noted)



Photo 1: From left to right, Apichat Choysrakoo and his mother and father — Kesorn and Somchit Choysrakoo — watch 4-year-old Kirin as he plays at home in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

BANGKOK, Thailand — While the Bangkok Thailand Temple may be new to this Southeast Asia nation with its dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, the roots of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints run deep — more than a half-century — and span four generations in many families.

From the first Church meeting held in 1968 to a 1978 courtship proposal statement of “I am a Latter-day Saint,” Latter-day Saints enjoy a fruitful past. And from a pair of young-adult converts preparing to be among the first couples sealed in the new Bangkok temple to parents of fourth-generation member children, Latter-day Saints look to a promising future.

And prompting the looking back and forward is the historic, present-day event — Sunday’s dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple by Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Here are several brief historical anecdotes, recollections and anticipations from Thai Latter-day Saints.

‘I am a Latter-day Saint’

After a year of exchanging letters and photos interspersed with gospel messages in trying to create an acquaintance and possible courtship, Somchit Choysrakoo got dressed in his best clothes and first introduced himself personally to his future wife in 1978, who lived in a small village 10 hours outside of Bangkok. The first words out of his mouth were “I am a Latter-day Saint.”

And now, 45 years later, Kesorn Choysrakoo recalls how strange that sounded coming from someone from the predominantly Buddhist countryside.

“She had no idea what that meant,” Somchit Choysrakoo said. “It meant that I am a Christian.”

Choysrakoo was a taxi driver who, in the spring of 1976, had picked up two foreigners on the streets of Bangkok, Thailand. He soon learned the pair were American full-time missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — and he almost as quickly learned of the gospel and later that year accepted the invitation to be baptized.

In fact, his baptism came on Christmas Day, and he went straight from the meetinghouse front and on to portray a wise man in the branch’s reenactment of the Savior’s birth that was being held. He was the oldest of eight siblings, with family to covert to the faith later — including his father, making it two Latter-day Saint generations of Choysrakoos.

The year after his baptism, Somchit Choysrako started a long-distance acquaintance with a young woman — Kesorn Sang-gnam — living in Sisaket, 10 hours away to the northeast. His uncle, who lived nearby, suggested the two get to know each other.



Photo 2: Kesorn and Somchit Choysrakoo smile at each other as they describe how they met as they talk at the home of their son, Apichat Choysrakoo, in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

For the first year, the two got acquainted only through letters and occasional photographs. “He taught her the gospel through their love letters,” explained their son, Apichat Choysrakoo.

A year later, Somchit Choysrako put on his Sunday best and traveled to Sisaket, giving Sang-gnam a New Testament and a Book of Mormon, bookmarked to [Alma 34](#). By praying, she felt more comfortable and received help with family challenges she was facing.

The two were married in Sisaket in November 1980, moving to Bangkok a week later, with Kesorn Choysrakoo baptized on Dec. 20, 1980.

Ten years later, the Choysrakoos and their two children were among the some 200 comprising the first group of Thai members to travel to the Manila Philippines Temple to perform temple ordinances for the first time.



Photo 3: Early photos of Kesorn and Somchit Choysrakoo they exchanged when they began their courtship in Thailand in the late 1970s. The image from a family scrapbook was photographed Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. | Provided by Apichat Choysrakoo



Photo 4: Somchit and Kesorn Choysrakoo and their two children stand with extended family members at the Manila Philippines Temple while on a 1990 group temple trip with some 200 Thai Latter-day Saints in 1990. The image from a family scrapbook was photographed Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. Provided by Apichat Choysrakoo

Apichat Choysrakoo was 6 years old when his family was sealed in the Manila temple “My sister left me alone in the changing room, and I was crying,” he recalled of his only memory of that trip.



Photo 5: Kesorn Choysrakoo smiles as she describes how she and her husband, Somchit Choysrakoo, met as they talk at the home of their son, Apichat Choysrakoo, in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023

For his parents, it was meaningful. “I knew that it was a very important time in our life, and we had desired it for a long time,” said Somchit Choysrakoo.

Added Kesorn Choysrakoo: “We had been taught in lessons all the time about the temple, but we thought we would never have the chance to go — it was too much money. But we had the determination.”

He quit his job that required occasional work on Sundays, adding the financial compensation from his departure to their savings and then helping his wife sell food and start a family business.



Photo 6: Somchit and Kesorn Choysrakoo and their two children stand with extended family members at the Manila Philippines Temple while on a 1990 group temple trip with some 200 Thai Latter-day Saints in 1990. The image from a family scrapbook was photographed Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. Provided by Apichat Choysrakoo

The sacrifices paled in comparison to the blessings and benefits. “What is important is the commitment we make to keep the covenants and how we live our lives after we leave the temple,” said Kerson Choysrakoo, who will join her husband as temple workers in the new temple once temple worship and ordinances begin the week following the dedication. “I will serve the rest of my life in the temple — as long as I am able.”

The 1968 start of missionary work

Larry White stood on the temple grounds the day before the Bangkok Thailand Temple was to be dedicated, positioned in the courtyard between a temple entrance and a Christus statue. Later, he was introduced to Elder Rasband and other Church leaders who had gathered for group photographs.

White was one of the six missionaries to serve in Bangkok in 1968, sent by the Southern Far East Mission president with their rudimentary Chinese language learning to start sharing the gospel in Thailand and in the Thai language. They were the first in more than 110 years, with President Brigham Young sending a missionary in 1854 to Siam, as it was known then; the missionary stayed just four months because of the language barrier before returning home.



Photo 7: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, left, greets Larry White of Salt Lake City, outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023. White was one of the six missionaries who arrived on February 2, 1968 to start missionary work.

“I remember that in 1968, we were not too far from here,” he recalled, having traveled with his wife, Janice White, from their Salt Lake City home to be in Bangkok for the dedication. “For our first meeting on March 17, 1968, 13 people were present — one of the two members at the time in the country.”

They had no Church scriptures or literature in Thai — not even a recognized name for the Church in the language, added White, who later served as a mission president in Thailand. “But within a very short time, miraculously we found and talked to the woman who became the principal translator of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price — her home was 300 to 400 yards from where the mission president had found a place for use to stay and live.”

The promise of a temple

Tiparat Kitsawat, 76, joined the Church in 1977 when there was one branch and one meetinghouse in Bangkok. He was staying in the home of his employer, who had a son studying in the United States and looked for opportunities to have contact with Americans in Bangkok. The employer invited the missionaries to come into their home — he and his family didn’t join the Church, but Kitsawat did.



Photo 8: Tiparat Kitsawat poses for photos just outside the Thailand Bangkok on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023.

In the more than four decades since, he has served in numerous branch, district, ward and stake callings — some several times, such as branch president and counselor to the mission president. He was also called as the country’s first stake president when the Bangkok Thailand Stake was organized in June 1996 by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

While he served as stake president, President Gordon B. Hinckley came to Thailand and promised the members that the country would sometime be home to a house of the Lord. “But I did not know how long it would take,” Kitsawat said.

Once the Manila Philippines Temple was dedicated in 1984 and began operations, mission presidents began helping groups of members travel there to perform temple ordinances, including endowments and sealings. Kitsawat helped convert his father, “and I took my father to be sealed to him,” he said. After its dedication in 1996, the Hong Kong China Temple became an additional option as couples and families started traveling for their own temple ordinances, such as the Kitsawats taking their two daughters for their own sealings in the Hong Kong temple. As a stake president, Tiparat Kitsawat was able to go to the Hong Kong temple every year he served because of area leadership trainings with apostles held annually in that city.



Photo 9: Tiparat Kitsawat looks up at the Bangkok Thailand Temple as he poses for photos outside the temple on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023. He possesses a journal-like book of his church service and the lists of names of those being taught about the gospel over the past decades who never joined the Church as well as Latter-day Saints who were converted at one time but since slipped back into inactivity. Kitsawat sees the benefits of a temple being in Bangkok.

“In Thailand, it is sometimes hard to keep the faith,” he said. “Now we have a special instrument — the temple will make the difference.”

The fourth generation

The tearful 6-year-old in the Manila temple is now first counselor in the Bangkok Thailand Stake presidency. President Apichat Choysrakoo and his wife, Suphalak, have two children — Tisha, a 7-year-old daughter and Kirin, a 4-year-old son — who are the fourth generation of Choysrakoo Latter-day Saints.



Photo 10: Three generations of the Choysrakoo family — Apichat, Kesorn, Somchit, Tisha, Kirin and Suphalak — pose for a photo at the home of Apichat and Suphalak Choysrakoo in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

Apichat Choysrakoo knew Suphalak Chomphabai — her maiden name — as youth attending Church in Bangkok. She traveled each Sunday — her only day off of the week — from Pattaya, a trip of three to four hours each way. He served a mission in Thailand and then went to BYU–Hawaii, while she subsequently moved to Bangkok. Some five years after first meeting, they were married in October 2012 in the Hong Kong temple.

President Choysrakoo sees the Bangkok temple dedication on two levels, first and most obvious being the formal dedicating of the house of the Lord as a structure to Him where sacred ordinances are performed and covenants made. But there has been a dedication given by local Latter-day Saints in not only constructing and preparing the sacred edifice but also to prepare themselves.

“I’ve seen people’s lifestyles change,” he said, adding how the temple becomes a symbol of commitment to covenants and striving to keep oneself clean and pure.

Suphalak Chomphabai is mindful of the blessings and opportunities for her children and family in having a temple so close in Bangkok. “It is good to have a temple nearby so they can see it often rather than having to go overseas to the temple,” she said, noting the cost savings as well as to see firsthand the temple and to prepare to enter as a youth rather than just talking about the temple in a classroom discussion.

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Photo 11: Apichat Choysrakoo helps his children Kirin and Tisha find games to play while at home in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.



Photo 12: Kirin Choysrakoo smiles up at his mother, Suphalak Choysrakoo, while at home in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023

“I hope when they grow up, they can go to a temple by themselves or with their youth group or ward or even use the temple as a way to do missionary work by bringing their nonmember friends to visit the temple grounds.”

The start of another Latter-day Saint family



Photo 13: Chutima “Dangkwa” Janjarus and Keeradid “Bank” Mankong pause for a photo with the Bangkok Thailand Temple as a backdrop in August 2023. Photo from the 5th floor patio of the multipurpose building. Provided by Chutima Janjarus

Chutima “Dangkwa” and Keeradid “Bank” Mankong will be one of the first couples to be married in the Bangkok Thailand Temple, with their date set for Tuesday, Oct. 31.

Janjarus, age 29, is a pre-kindergarten teacher of 3- and 4-year-olds. A convert to the Church in October 2014 and only member in her family, she served in the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission from 2018 to 2019. She lives in Maha Sarakham, a drive of nearly seven hours northeast of Thailand.

Mankong, 35, lives in Ubon Ratchathani — more than eight hours east of Bangkok — with his 98-year-old grandmother and 59-year-old father. Like his fiancée, he is a college graduate, and met the missionaries on the basketball court 10 years, being baptized at age 25.



Photo 14: Chutima “Dangkwa” Janjarus is joined by her father, mother and younger sister at the Bangkok Thailand Temple 2023 public open house in September Provided by Chutima Janjarus

The two met as staff members working at last year’s Ubon Thailand Stake young single adult camp. Serving at the camp was a new experience for Mankong, who opted to care for his grandmother and father rather than serve a mission in his late 20s. “I have never felt free to serve like that,” he said, adding that Janjarus was a supportive, hard-working colleague. “So, I decided to ask her for a date after we finished the camp.”

The distance of their hometowns requires traveling to the temple — but the engaged couple did that and more for a special YSA event at the start of the temple’s open house in late August.



Photo 15: Young single adults from across Thailand gather for a photo with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Susan Gong, following a tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Aug. 26, 2023.

With just two weeks' notice, they were asked to put together a choir to sing at the YSA temple tour and devotional with Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "It was quite a challenge for us, but everything went well," Janjarus said.

How do the two feel as they prepare for their Oct. 31 sealing?

"We waited a long time — I mean, a year since we started dating was a long time for me to marry him," Janjarus said. "I am so excited to be marrying my best friend — and that's not just for this life."

Mankong added: "I am so grateful to have Dangkwa with me in this challenging world. ... This makes everything easier. I want to be with her for eternity."



Photo 16: Chutima “Dangkwa” Janjarus, lower left, visits Keeradid and his family at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. Provided by Chutima Janjarus

Elder Rasband meets with stake, district and branch presidents from 11 countries comprising the Bangkok temple district

The gathering the night before the temple dedication draws leaders from Cambodia to Indonesia to Pakistan, who are charged to help their members be ‘recommended to the Lord



Photo 1: Elder Ronald A. Rasband, left, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, greets local Church leaders from 11 Southeast Asia countries within the Bangkok Thailand Temple district at a dinner in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

By Scott Taylor

Photo Credits: Scott G Winterton, Deseret News

BANGKOK, Thailand — Many attending the Sunday, Oct. 22, dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple saw it as a historic event, giving The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints its first house of the Lord centrally located in central Southeast Asia.

Stretching from Cambodia to Pakistan and from Nepal to Indonesia, the Bangkok temple district is the Church's largest as far as combined geography and population. So when stake, district and branch presidents from 11 Southeast Asia nations gathered the evening before the temple dedication, Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also applied a "historic" label.



Photo 2: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, center of second row, pose for photos at a dinner for local Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

“My heart is so full seeing you here tonight. I want to say that heaven is smiling on us tonight,” said Elder Rasband, adding, “This has been a historic night.”

Attending the Saturday evening, Oct. 21, dinner meeting in a central Bangkok hotel ballroom were presidents and spouses from the following units in the Bangkok temple district:

- Cambodia — 2 stakes, 4 districts
- India — 4 stakes, 3 districts
- Indonesia — 2 stakes, 1 district
- Laos — 1 branch
- Malaysia — 5 districts
- Myanmar — 2 branches
- Pakistan — 3 districts

- Singapore — 1 stake
- Sri Lanka — 1 district
- Thailand — 4 stakes, 2 districts
- Vietnam — 2 districts



Photo 3: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, watch the program at a dinner for local Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

Elder Rasband, who will dedicate the Bangkok Thailand Temple, and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, were joined by the Asia Area presidency and other General Authority Seventies, Area Seventies, and emeritus General Authority Seventies who were participating in the dedication.

Elder Rasband called the 11 nations the Church’s “formative countries” in the temple district. Two other temples are under construction in the district — the Phnom Penh Cambodia and Bengaluru India temples — with two others announced and in planning for Singapore and Jakarta, Indonesia.



Photo 4: Members arrive at the Bangkok Thailand Temple prior to the dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

Because of Bangkok’s central location in the Church’s Asia Area and its importance in tourism and commerce, “it really is a gateway into Asia,” said Elder Benjamin M.Z. Tai, a General Authority Seventy and Asia Area president. “It attracts people to come here.”

Elder Tai said it is interesting to see the current development of the Church in the Asia Area, where half of the world’s population resides. “Any way into the future, it’s easy to see how this could be multiple areas, just because of the way the Church will grow.

“And Bangkok’s location, ease of access and logistical connections makes it an ideal area as a center of the Church in Southeast Asia — and with a temple, even more.”



Photo 5: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles makes a few remarks at a dinner for local Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

For most of these leaders, the weekend provided a first time attending a temple dedication in person, Elder Rasband said, although some may have participated remotely last year with the rededication of the Hong Kong Temple. And it may be the first time — or perhaps the second or third — to be inside a temple.

“To be able to come with their spouses and to see and sit with other leaders, they will have a vision of actually what this work is all about and what the Church is in Asia,” the Apostle said.

Mindful that many of the leaders will return home where there isn’t a temple, Elder Rasband emphasized the importance of having Latter-day Saints throughout Southeast Asia being “recommended to the Lord and living a worthy, temple-recommended life.”



Photo 6: Elder Ronald A. Rasband takes a few moments to talk to Chaitaya “Cherry” Thongmee as her husband, Bangkok Thailand West Stake President Arun Thongmee, watches following a dinner for the Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

He added: “Even though they can’t come to the Bangkok temple often because of their circumstances, they can each have temple worthiness and the blessings and promises that come from that.”

His charge to the visiting stake, district and branch leaders: “Take back to your countries and the people the Spirit you feel here this weekend. There will be more [temples]; the Lord will continue to pour out His Spirit on Southeast Asia.”

The participating leaders were grateful for the evening gathering, the temple dedication and to be with Elder Rasband.



Photo 7: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles makes a few remarks at a dinner for the Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

“It’s a moment of great joy, because what it means to the people in Thailand, in all of Southeast Asia and for us in Singapore,” said Singapore Stake President Jean-Luc Butel. “We’re waiting for a temple hopefully in a few years, and to see the gathering of these brothers and sisters and to feel that great spirit — I’m just happy tonight.”

Tiengsack Inthavong, branch president in Vientiane, Laos, said it was a “great honor to meet the Apostle of the Lord.”

He added: “I am sure that there are a lot of people in Laos who would like to come, and we will take them here to the temple.”



Photo 8: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, greet attendees at a dinner for the Church leaders from across Southeast Asia in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

‘Cradled in the Arms of Prophets, Apostles’: Elder Rasband dedicates Bangkok Thailand Temple, the first on the Southeast Asia peninsula

Elder Ronald A. Rasband pays special tribute to the roles of the last 3 Church presidents in the coming of the Bangkok Thailand Temple



Photo 1 - Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, greet a few members outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedication sessions on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

By Scott Taylor

Photo Credits: Scott G Winterton, Deseret News

BANGKOK, Thailand — The Southeastern Asian nation of Thailand is known as “the land of smiles,” and its capital city of Bangkok is called “the city of angels.”

Smiles extended worldwide and upward to heaven as Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the Bangkok Thailand Temple in two sessions on Sunday, Oct. 22. The temple is not only the first for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Bangkok, but also in Thailand and on the peninsula of Southeast Asia.



Photo 2: Members arrive at the Bangkok Thailand Temple prior to the dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

The Bangkok temple becomes the 185th dedicated house of the Lord for the Church, which has 335 total temples dedicated, under construction or in planning and design.

‘Cradled in the arms of prophets and apostles’

In preparing for the temple dedication and the dedicatory prayer he offered, Elder Rasband reviewed Thailand’s history and the Church’s history in the country and throughout Southeast Asia. He took pages of notes — particularly of all the apostolic visits to Thailand over the years.



Photo 3: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, left, walk between the Bangkok Thailand Temple and the neighboring multipurpose building to greet those in the overflow for the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand temple on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

“What has settled on me is how the country and the temple have been cradled in the arms of prophets and apostles,” Elder Rasband said.

He cited from his research that two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles — who both later served as Church presidents — played key roles in the late 1960s: Elder Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated Thailand for the preaching of the gospel on Nov. 2, 1966, in Bangkok’s Lumpini Park, and Elder Ezra Taft Benson presented an English copy of the Book of Mormon to the King of Thailand, His Majesty King Bhumiphol Adulyadej, in a Nov. 30, 1968, interview that was broadcast on television.



Photo 4: The Bangkok Thailand Temple, as photographed on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, two days before its Oct. 22 dedication.

In 1974, Elder David B. Haight, also of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated the Church's first meetinghouse in the Asok area of Bangkok, not far from the new temple's location.

Elder Rasband also paid special tribute to the roles of the last three Church presidents in the coming of the Bangkok Thailand Temple — President Hinckley, who in 2000 foretold of a temple; President Thomas S. Monson, who officially announced the temple in 2015; and President Russell M. Nelson, who toured the temple site five years ago and assigned Elder Rasband to do this weekend's dedication.

“The Church located its temple here by revelation,” Elder Rasband said.

Citing the last 3 Church presidents

In an interview with the Church News the day before the temple dedication, Elder Rasband said he would share three quotes from the three Church presidents with those attending the sessions, wanting to emphasize the involvement of the prophets.

He quoted President Hinckley from a June 2000 meeting with members in Bangkok: “The Lord has heard our prayers. He has led us under difficulties for a long season. But now Heaven is smiling upon us. You are pioneers here in carrying forward the work of the Lord in this country, and I promise that if you are faithful, the time will come when a temple will be constructed in Thailand.”



Photo 5 - Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints poses with his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedication sessions

He quoted President Monson's announcement of a temple for Bangkok in the Sunday morning session of April 2015 general conference: "This morning I am very pleased to announce three new temples which will be built in the following locations: Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Port au Prince, Haiti; and Bangkok, Thailand. What marvelous blessings are in store for our faithful members in these areas."

And he quoted President Nelson, who first came to Thailand as a visiting physician before his call in 1984 as an Apostle and who later came as a senior Church leader, the most recent being his inaugural 2018 global ministry. During the April 2018 meeting with members in Bangkok, President Nelson promised: "I bless you with love at home, success in your

work and joy in your hearts as you prepare for the temple of the Lord in this sacred country."



Photo 6 - Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints poses with his wife Sister Melanie Rasband, outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedications sessions on Sunday October 22, 2023.



Photo 7: Members wait to enter the Bangkok Thailand Temple for the second of two dedication sessions on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

And he quoted President Nelson, who first came to Thailand as a visiting physician before his call in 1984 as an Apostle and who later came as a senior Church leader, the most recent being his inaugural 2018 global ministry. During the April 2018 meeting with members in Bangkok, President Nelson promised: “I bless you with love at home, success in your work and joy in your hearts as you prepare for the temple of the Lord in this sacred country.”

Sunday’s dedication services drew several thousand Latter-day Saints throughout the day, as attendees were seated not only throughout the 48,525-square-foot, six-story and nine-spired temple for the two sessions, but also in the two large chapels and overflow areas in the neighboring multipurpose building. The 91,370-square foot building also includes office areas, meeting rooms, seminary and institute facilities, patron housing, and mission offices along with a FamilySearch Center.



Photo 8: A portion of one of the structures at the Royal Palace in Bangkok

Besides longtime pioneer members, other local Latter-day Saints, former full-time missionaries who served in Thailand and former Thai residents returned to Bangkok for the occasion. So did emeritus General Authority Seventies — such as Elder Robert C. Gay and Elder David F. Evans — who had had ecclesiastical assignments or personal interests in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

Elder Rasband had traveled many times previously to Bangkok and Thailand as a former executive for Huntsman Chemical, including president and chief operating officer. The temple dedication was the latest in a handful of leadership assignments he has fulfilled in Thailand, including a 2008 stake conference with the Bangkok Thailand Stake and its stake leader, President Wisit Khanakham. That connection was revisited at this weekend's dedication, since President Khanakham and his wife, Sister Sumamaan Srisarakham Khanakham, are the president and matron of the Bangkok temple.



Photo 9: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, wave to a few members outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedication sessions on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023

It all made for a much appreciated, humbling and “surreal” assignment, Elder Rasband said. “None of us who are ever assigned to dedicate a temple know why we were chosen — it just happens by divine design. As I walked through the temple, I was just overwhelmed with emotion, having quite a personal love and affection for this people, the country and the leaders I’ve worked with here.”

He was joined at the dedication events by his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband; Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai, General Authority Seventy and president of the Asia Area, and his wife, Sister Naomi Toma Tai; Elder Kevin R. Duncan, a General Authority Seventy and executive director of the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Nancy Duncan; and Elder Erich W. Kopischke, a General Authority Seventy and Temple Department assistant executive director, and his wife, Sister Christiane Kopischke.



Photo 10: From left to right: Elder Kevin R. Duncan, a General Authority Seventy and executive director of the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Nancy Duncan; Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai, a General Authority Seventy and president of the Asia Area, and his wife, Sister Naomi Toma Tai; Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband; and Elder Erich W. Kopischke, a General Authority Seventy and assistant executive director in the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Christiane Kopischke; pose for photos outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedication sessions on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

Also in Bangkok for the weekend events were the two General Authority Seventy counselors in the area presidency and their wives — Elder Kelly R. Johnson and Sister Terri Johnson, and Elder Michael John U. Teh and Sister Grace Teh.

Blessings beyond Thailand’s borders

The blessings of the Bangkok Thailand Temple will reach beyond the host nation’s borders. The temple district spans from Cambodia to Pakistan and from Nepal to Indonesia.



Photo 11: Loha Prasat, or “the metal castle,” in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023.

Just like Thai Latter-day Saints have traveled first to the Manila Philippines Temple and later to the Hong Kong China Temple to participate in temple ordinances for themselves and their deceased relatives, members from across Southeast Asia will be coming to the new house of the Lord in Bangkok for temple work and worship.

The result is a new era of Christ-centered worship throughout Southeast Asia, with temples under construction in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Bengaluru, India, and others announced for Singapore and Jakarta, Indonesia.



Photo 12: The new Bangkok Thailand Temple in the city on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Looking toward the intersection of New Phetchaburi Road (elevated across the intersection) and Soi Asoke.

The Church in Thailand

In 1852, Brigham Young called four missionaries to serve in Thailand, which was then known as Siam. Only one eventually made it, but not arriving until 1854 and staying only four months because of the language barrier.

Member families living in Bangkok in the 1950s began to hold informal and infrequent meetings, until the Church authorized regular worship services for a small, English-speaking



Photo 13 – Members talk and hug after attending the first session of the Bangkok Thailand Temple dedication on Sunday October 22, 2023.

ince.

Six missionaries were first sent to Thailand in 1968, with a mission in the country created in 1973. The first stake was created in Bangkok in 1995, with a second in the city coming in 2014 and a third two years later.

Church membership in Thailand now exceeds 23,000 in more than 40 congregations, with meetinghouses throughout Bangkok and in most large urban centers in the country, including Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, Udon Thani and Ubon

Rachathani.

What members are saying

Chontica “Apple” Sihanat is a second-generation Thai Latter-day Saint who was baptized at age 9 and served a mission in Thailand. With a temple in Bangkok, Shinant says “I feel like there is another home that I can come to at any time. I feel there will be happiness happening in my life more easily because it will be closer to my family.”



Photo 14: Food sits on a streetside table in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Street vendors are common in Bangkok.

Besides being excited to do family history work, she looks forward to the temple’s influence for her 17-year-old son: “My son will be safe and protected and know the way to live his life because of the clear standards of the temple and its proximity to us now.”



Photo 15: Chontica Sihanat poses for photos at the Thailand Bangkok Temple on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023. Scott G Winterton. Deseret News

Ayutthayapacawadee McGeorge said attending the dedication provided an opportunity for increased personal revelation. “I received more understanding on the storms in our life and how we need to carry our covenants across the river currents of life,” she said.

Pawana Preachakul, 14, added: “The temple is very sacred to me and my family. In the future, I want to be in this temple and to serve here.”



Photo 16 - Members pose for a photo between the first and second sessions of the Bangkok Thailand Temple dedication on Sunday, October 22, 2023

Parinya Suphan, 16, said: “It is a blessing to have a temple here and do temple work for deceased ancestors. It is a blessing for me and for them.”

Sasitorn Vantanachan is a pioneer member who was baptized in 1968. Through an acquaintance, she learned about the missionaries and learned they lived on the same street as a 5-year-old boy that she was teaching. “I was looking for them, not them looking for me,” she recalled.



Photo 17: Members pose for a photo between the first and second sessions of the Bangkok Thailand Temple dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

“The temple back then was something far-fetched — we didn’t even have a chapel then,” she said, explaining that the meetings were usually only a handful of people gathered in

the missionaries' residence. "It was something beyond my thinking — I couldn't comprehend it."

Fifty-five years later, a temple has come to Bangkok. "It seems more like a dream — but now you can touch it, you can go into it," Vantanachan said. "The people in Thailand are blessed — we feel very humble, very fortunate that we have a way here to continue on the covenant path."

Bangkok Thailand Temple Open House and Dedication Data

Location: 1645/6 New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan, Ratch Bangkok 10400 Thailand.

Announced: April 5, 2015, by President Thomas S. Monson

Groundbreaking: Jan. 26, 2019, with Elder Robert C. Gay of the Presidency of the Seventy presiding and Elder David F. Evans, a General Authority Seventy and then president of the Asia Area, offering the dedicatory prayer on the site and construction process.

Public open house: Friday, Sept. 1, through Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023, excluding Sundays.

Dedication: Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023, by Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Property size: 1.77 acres.

Building size: 48,525 square feet.

Building height: 242 feet, including the spire.

More Bangkok Thailand Temple dedication weekend photos



Photo 18: A woman takes photos of her recommend for the Bangkok Temple Dedication



Photo 19: The Bangkok Thailand Temple on the day of its dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.



Photo 20: Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband, pose for a photo in front of the Christus status in the atrium between the Bangkok Thailand Temple



Photo 21: From left to right, Elder Kevin R. Duncan, a General Authority Seventy and executive director of the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Nancy Duncan; Elder Erich W. Kopischke, a General Authority Seventy and assistant executive director in the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Christiane Kopischke; Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife, Sister Melanie Rasband; and Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai, General Authority Seventy and president of the Asia Area, and his wife, Sister Naomi Toma Tai; pose for photos outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.



Photo 22: Members arrive and make their way inside for the Bangkok Thailand Temple dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.



Photo 23: Members check for recommends as attendees arrive at the Bangkok Thailand Temple prior to the dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.



Photo: 24: Bangkok, Thailand, on Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023



Photo 25: The Benjakitti Forest Park in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023.



Photo 26: Tourists walk on the grounds of the Royal Palace in Bangkok, Thailand, on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023.



Photo 27: A street scene in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023.



Photo 28: Riders gather at a red light as other traffic moves about them in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday [This is the intersection of Asoke and Petchaburi Road near the Bangkok Thailand Temple]

Bangkok Thailand Temple dedicatory prayer: Elder Rasband prays, ‘May this temple fulfill its blessed purpose’

‘May all who come here, recommended to the Lord, be further enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel, the hope of life eternal, and Thy promised peace’



Photo: 1 Members arrive at the Bangkok Thailand Temple prior to the dedication on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

By Mary Richards

Photo Credit: Scott G Winterton, Deseret News

Following is the text of the prayer offered by [Elder Ronald A. Rasband](#) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to dedicate the [Bangkok Thailand Temple](#) on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023.

O God, our Eternal Father, Thou great Elohim who liveth and reigneth over all the earth, whose eternal plan blesses all Thy children, we come before Thee in gratitude and humility to dedicate this magnificent Bangkok Thailand Temple. We express our deep appreciation for this, Thy holy house, a sacred place of worship in this ancient land. May Thy children attending this temple, gain greater knowledge of Thee, the only true God,

and Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son.

We love Thee, Father, and thank Thee for the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. By Thy divine design, our Savior set in place the covenant path for us to follow, and by His infinite Atonement, opened the gates of salvation for all generations and dispensations. We thank Thee for His ministry, His devotion, His teachings, and His great atoning sacrifice.

We are grateful for the everlasting gospel restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. What a blessing to have it translated into many languages of this temple district. We thank Thee for our living Prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, and for those who serve with him in the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the councils of Thy Church.

Now, we come before Thee, at the direction of President Nelson, and by the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and in the office of the Holy Apostleship which I bear, we dedicate and consecrate this magnificent Bangkok Thailand Temple to Thee, Almighty God, and to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May this temple fulfill its blessed purpose, “holiness to the Lord,” and may it stand as a sentinel on earth of Thy eternal plan, separate and apart from the ways of the world. May all who come here, recommended to the Lord, be further enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel, the hope of life eternal and Thy promised peace.

We ask Thee to bless the land and the beautiful adjacent building, including the chapels, patron housing, mission facilities and other areas of this temple. We dedicate the baptistry, the areas for initiatory ordinances, the endowment and sealing rooms, the holy altars and the celestial room. Wilt Thou watch over the foundation, exterior structure and distinctive spires, the floors, walls, doors, furnishings and mechanical systems. Protect this structure from natural disasters, from hostile or disruptive actions that may harm this hallowed ground, and pour down blessings upon the artisans, craftsmen and laborers whose best work is displayed in this beautiful temple.

We ask Thee to bless all who serve in this temple, including the temple president and his counselors, the matron and her assistants, temple workers, volunteers and employees.

This will be the 185th dedicated, operating temple in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We appreciate the tithes of faithful Saints around the world who made possible its construction. May we show our gratitude in being faithful in our tithes and offerings. May we, Thy children, commit ourselves by covenant to Thee in this holy house and do the same on behalf of our ancestors. This is a day of rejoicing on both sides of the veil.

With this long-awaited temple comes a new era of Christ-centered worship in this temple district. May the very presence of this temple spread the love of God and the spirit of the gospel into the lives of those with long-held customs and traditions across Southeast Asia. May governments prosper as they continue to protect the religious liberties of all faiths, large and small.

May this temple be a sanctuary from the world filled with the light bestowed by the heavens. As we worship here, may we become more like Thee and Thy Son, may we feel the sweet influence of the Holy Ghost and the profound blessings of personal revelation. And when we come to the temple with heavy hearts, with hardships and trials, temporal and spiritual afflictions and needs, may we be comforted, lifted and filled with joy in the journey of life and the promise of eternity through our faithfulness.

May our precious youth not be distracted by the adversary but rejoice in the opportunity to serve ancestors in Thy house. May they continue temple service throughout their lives, that they may be directed in a righteous course by righteous choices, that the Church will continue to flourish in this richly blessed land.

Now, may we go forth to live true to the covenants made within these sacred walls. May we attend often to worship and renew our souls and sacred covenants, may we keep our hearts pure and our hands ever willing to serve Thee. May we think celestial, letting thy Spirit prevail in our lives, and strive to be peacemakers always.

This dedicated temple will stand as a beacon of hope in Jesus Christ and faith in Thy eternal plan. Wilt Thou accept it as Thy house, holy as Thou art holy. We gratefully place it in Thy hands as a manifestation of our devotion to Thee. Smile upon us, favor us with Thy mercy and lift us up at the last day, we humbly pray in the beloved name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.



Photo 2: The Bangkok Thailand Temple surrounded by skyscrapers in Bangkok, Thailand, in summer 2023. The building to the right of the temple is the Church multipurpose building. It is six stories tall (including access to rooftop equipment). Below it are two levels of parking.



Photo 3: The courtyard with a reflecting pond and Christus statue at the Bangkok Thailand Temple in Bangkok, Thailand, this view is looking towards the multipurpose building from near the temple. Photo taken in the summer of 2023.



Photo 4: From left to right, Elder Kevin R. Duncan, a General Authority Seventy and executive director of the Temple Department, and his wife, Sister Nancy Duncan, Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai, General Authority Seventy and president of the Asia Area, and Sister Naomi Toma Tai, Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and his wife Sister Melanie Rasband and Elder Erich W. Kopischke, a General Authority Seventy and assistant executive director in the Temple Department and Sister Christiane Kopischke pose for photos outside the Bangkok Thailand Temple between the first and second dedication sessions.



Photo 5: Front view of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, as photographed on Thursday, Oct. 20, 2023, three days before its Oct. 22 dedication.

Social Media Post by Elder Ronald A. Rasband

October 22, 2023

What a unique blessing it was to be in Thailand today and dedicate the beautiful Bangkok Thailand Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although I learned of my assignment to dedicate this house of the Lord from President Russell M. Nelson only in recent months, this day is the culmination of decades of effort by the Lord's prophets.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated Thailand for preaching the gospel in 1966. Years later, as president of the Church in the year 2000, President Hinckley told a gathering of members of the Church in Bangkok that if they would be faithful, they would one day have a temple in their midst.

This prophecy came closer to reality in 2015 when President Thomas S. Monson announced that the temple in Bangkok would be built. And, of course, over the last several years, our dear prophet President Nelson has overseen the work that has gone into the construction and completion of this beautiful house of the Lord. I am humbled that he would assign me to dedicate this remarkable temple.

As I walked through the temple, I was overwhelmed with emotion, having quite a personal love and affection for this people, the country and the leaders I've worked with here—both professionally before being called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles years ago and as part of my Church assignments since that time.

Temples, no matter where they are, rise above the ways of the world. Every temple in the world stands as a testament to our faith in eternal life and the joy of spending it with our families and our Heavenly Father. Attending the temple increases our understanding of the Godhead and the everlasting gospel, our commitment to live and teach truth, and our willingness to follow the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Section 4

Index for Global Thailand Missionary Reunions

1. Open House Reunion – September 1, 2023, pg. 2
2. Dedication Reunion – October 21, 2023, pg.3

Global Thailand Returned Missionary Reunions

Two global Thailand missionary reunions were held, one on the first day of the public Temple Open House and another on the Saturday Evening before the dedication. Elder Suchat Chaichana oversaw the organization of these reunions. Here are the programs:

Date: Friday, September 1, 2023

Time: 5:00 PM -8:00 PM

Location: Asoke Church Building: 72 Soi Chulindr, Sukhumvit 21 Road, Bangkok 10110

Temple Open House: 9 AM to 9 PM at your convenience

RM Reunion Program:

5:00 PM Registration, Name Tags Assign

5:30 PM Testimony Session

Guest Speakers: 10 minutes for each couple

1. President and Sister Anan Eldredge (TBM 1998-1991)
2. President and Sister Larry R. White (TBM 1991-1994)
3. President and Sister Michael S. Smith (TBM 2009-2012)

6:30 PM Dinner and Social

Note: President Burgener was invited to speak at this reunion. However, mission business prevented him from attending.

Elder Chaichana reported the count for this reunion (including family members) was 460.

Date: Saturday, October 21, 2023

Time: 5:00 PM -8:00 PM

Location: Asoke Church Building: 72 Soi Chulindr, Sukhumvit 21 Road, Bangkok 10110

RM Reunion Program:

5:00 PM Registration, Name Tags Assign

5:30 PM Testimony Session

Guest Speakers: 10 minutes for each couple

1. President and Sister Michael A. Goodman (TBM 1997-2000)
2. President and Sister Martin R. Slater (TBM 2000-2003)
3. President and Sister Karl L. Dodge (TBM 2006-2009)
4. President and Sister David M. Senior (TBM 2012-2015)
5. President and Sister Todd M. Hammond (TBM 2018-2021)

6:30 PM Dinner and Social

Elder Chaichana reported the count for this reunion (including family members) was 350.

At both events, there were mission presidents whose presentations went well over the allotted ten minutes.

To see specific reports on each event, please see:

- September 1, 2024: See Memories – Reed B. Haslam
- October 21, 2024: See Memories – John W. Montgomery
- Both Reunions; See Memories – Larry R. White

Section 5

Index to Individual Memories from The Open House and Dedication of The Thailand Bangkok Temple

Alphabetical by Last Name

1. Kelly Burgener
2. Julie Farr
3. Ronald Grover
4. Reed B. Haslam
5. Greg Low
6. John W. Montgomery
7. Steve Stevens
8. Mark Tippets
9. Larry R. White

Thailand Bangkok Temple Open House

By Kelly Burgener Thailand Bangkok Mission President (2021-2024)

Friday, September 1, 2023, was an unusually busy day for the Thailand Bangkok Mission. The Bangkok Thailand Temple open house had begun with the Media Tour on August 29, the VIP tour for invited guests on August 30–31, and the public tour of the open house began on Friday, September 1, 2023. President and Sister Burgener also held the transfer morning meeting and Mission Leadership Council (MLC) on Friday, September 1. This is why I was not able to make it to the All Thailand Bangkok Missionary Reunion that evening.

As soon as the transfer meeting finished at 8:30 am, the missionaries who had been assigned to serve at the open house that day hurried from the Asoke church building to the temple and annex as the open house began at 9:00 am. The three missionaries who would finish their mission later that night, also had the opportunity to serve in the open house and participate in the temple tour. There were a few details to be worked out with the open house committee about the missionaries' assignments. The APs, Elder Tyson Haslam and Elder Jack Rich made many adjustments throughout the open house to keep the assignment schedule up to date.

The senior missionaries serving in the upcountry of Thailand and Laos arrived a day or two before the Media Day on August 29. Some of the senior missionaries served during the entire open house from August 29 – September 16, 2023. Others served a week or more depending on their responsibilities in their areas. Elder David and Sister Darlene Anglesey, who had been called as communication missionaries, served as liaisons between the mission and the open house committee throughout the planning of the open house.

The senior missionaries had been given the assignment to welcome and give guidance to the media and guests during the VIP tour and throughout the public tour. President Burgener asked Elder Lee and Sister Marie Tarbet to work with all of the missionaries to keep the daily assignments filled and to give needed breaks to missionaries at different times throughout the three shifts – morning, afternoon, and evening. The hours of the open house were from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Monday through Saturday.

The day with the highest attendance for the open house was Saturday, September 9, when 3,728 people came to the open house. After the final day finished, the total attendance was 24,350 people. The open house committee was very pleased with the number of people who attended.

Many of the guests described feelings of warmth, joy, and peace after touring the temple. Some of the people who came who were not members of the Church expressed that their favorite room was the “meditation room” meaning the Celestial room. As

people exited the temple, they walked out onto the plaza where the beautiful Christus statue stands. This was the place during the tour where, if they desired, people could ask missionaries questions about what they had experienced. Missionaries offered to take photos of guests by the Christus statue. Each branch and ward outside of Bangkok chartered buses to bring members to the open house. Missionaries invited the people they were teaching to come with the branch or ward members in hopes that they could make friends with the members during the bus ride and temple tour.

Elder Mark and Sister Sandra Tippets served an MLS mission in the Udorn District and Udorn Zone. They knew and cared about a young man who was a member of the Udorn 2 Branch named Worathon Wongasa or “Ben” as most people knew him. Ben had wanted to serve a mission for a long time, but he had autism which made a proselyting mission not possible for him. Elder and Sister Tippets tried to find a way he could serve a service mission in Udorn and live at home with his parents, but they could not find a way to make this a possibility. Elder Tippets counseled with President Burgener several times about Ben and his desire to serve a mission.

Near the end of Elder and Sister Tippet’s mission that finished in July 2023, they shared an idea with President and Sister Burgener of how Ben could serve a “mini” service mission. Elder and Sister Tippets said they would fly back to Bangkok at their own expense a few days before the first day of the open house. Ben’s parents would bring their son from Udorn to Bangkok to join with Elder and Sister Tippets. They would be Ben’s companions so he could serve at the open house. They planned a daily routine that included scripture study and serving together in a trio throughout the open house.

Ben served every day of the open house from Media Day on August 28 to the last day of the public tour on September 16. He was very happy to have a missionary name badge that read “Brother Ben” on it. The selfless sacrifice of Elder and Sister Tippets to return to Bangkok three weeks after finishing their own mission was an example of Christlike love for “the one.” Brother Ben touched many hearts during the three weeks that he served at the open house with his companions, Elder and Sister Tippets.

Two Relief Society sisters asked Elder and Sister Tippets for help with an idea they had. They wanted to design and make a Bangkok Thailand Temple necklace. All sales would go to help members in the Udorn District travel to the temple open house. Elder Tippets helped them find a place that would make the temple necklaces and set up a website where the necklaces were sold. After the necklaces began selling so well, the two Relief Society sisters also made a temple tie pin. A supply of necklaces and tie pins was kept in the mission office. Many people who came to the open house stopped by the mission office to buy necklaces and tie pins.

More necklaces and tie pins were sold than anticipated and enough money was made to supplement the travel for the members in the Udorn District. These two women also shared a substantial amount of money from their sales with the Ubon Stake and the Chiang Mai District. This made it possible for many more members and people learning

with the missionaries to travel to Bangkok to participate in the open house. Many of the senior sister missionaries bought necklaces for the younger sister missionaries who were serving in their zones. The younger sister missionaries were delighted to receive a beautiful temple necklace as a reminder of this time of the open house and dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple.

With all the senior missionaries in the Thailand Bangkok Mission serving at the temple open house, President and Sister Burgener took the opportunity to gather together for dinner on Thursday, September 7, 2023. This gave the senior missionaries the opportunity to meet Elder and Sister Ramsden who had arrived the night before. It also gave them the opportunity to meet Elder John and Sister June Fryer who arrived in Laos to begin their humanitarian mission in mid-June. This was the first time Elder and Sister Fryer had traveled to Bangkok since they began their mission. President and Sister Burgener felt so much gratitude for the senior missionaries serving with them. They knew they could not do their assignments without the service of the senior missionaries.

The senior missionaries enjoyed meeting the two new senior missionary couples and renewing their friendship with the other senior missionaries. They had dinner in the Annex cultural hall. President and Sister Burgener shared brief messages. Then they gave each senior missionary a temple handkerchief to be used at the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on October 22, 2023. The handkerchiefs were also a beautiful keepsake. Sister Williams and Sister Anglesey had worked hard on this project since July and had the handkerchiefs ready to be given.

Thailand Bangkok Temple Dedication

By Kelly Burgener Thailand Bangkok Mission President (2021-2024)

At the beginning of the third week of October, the zone leaders in the Bangkok Zone sent this message to the missionaries in their Zone. “Get ready for the best week of your mission! You will have Zone P-day on Wednesday October 18; Zone Conference on Thursday, October 19; a mission-wide devotional with Elder Ronald A. Rasband on Friday, October 20, and the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on Sunday, October 22, 2023 the day we’ve all been waiting for!” This message was worded exactly right! This week would prove to be one of the most special weeks – if not the most special week – for the missionaries. The Bangkok Zone held interviews and visits, on their Zone P-day, and their finding activity at the Srinakarin church building. The Bangkok Zone Conference was held at the Asoke church building.

To prepare for Elder Ronald A. and Sister Melanie Rasband’s devotional, President Burgener asked the missionaries to study one of Elder Rasband’s General Conference talks each day beginning with the most recent General Conference. President and Sister

Burgener were given instructions to help prepare for the mission-wide devotional. Elder Rasband wanted to take a photo with all the missionaries before the devotional began.

On Friday, October 20, the missionaries were to arrive at the annex cultural hall at 3:00 pm. One of the photographers for the Church and his crew had all the chairs set up, and the missionaries were quickly organized. The plan was that the missionaries would remain set-up for the photograph from 3:00 pm to a little before 4:00 pm. President and Sister Burgener planned for the missionaries to sing hymns as a way to remain reverent and invite the Spirit to be with the missionaries during the devotional.

After the missionaries had sung four hymns, the chorister asked President Burgener what other hymns he would like to sing. He asked Sister Burgener and she said, "I Stand All Amazed." The missionaries were singing this inspirational hymn with all their hearts when Elder and Sister Rasband walked into the cultural hall. Elder and Sister Rasband stopped and listened as they looked over the 180 missionaries of the Thailand Bangkok Mission. When the missionaries finished singing, Elder and Sister Rasband walked over to President and Sister Burgener. The first words Elder Rasband said were, "Why did you choose to sing that hymn?" President Burgener replied, "Because it is Sister Burgener's favorite hymn." Then Elder Rasband said with tears in his eyes, "It is my favorite hymn too. My first General Conference address was titled, "I Stand All Amazed" in October 2015. President and Sister Burgener were grateful that the Spirit guided them to choose that hymn for the missionaries to sing.

The Asia Area presidency and their wives were also in attendance for this devotional. Elder Benjamin and Sister Naomi Tai, Elder Kelly and Sister Terri Johnson, and Elder Michael and Sister Grace Teh. After the photograph was taken, the missionaries were asked to line up and shake hands with Elder and Sister Rasband and the other church leaders in attendance. They were asked to share their name, the area of the mission they served in, and where they were from. Afterwards, the devotional began in the chapel. Elder Rasband asked two missionaries, Sister Duanghathai Sayrach and Elder Zachary Hada, to share their testimonies. Brief remarks were shared by President and Sister Burgener, and then Elder and Sister Teh.



*The full Thailand Bangkok Mission Photo with Elder and Sister Rasband
The photo taken in a cultural hall at the multipurpose building.*

Next, Sister Rasband shared her message. She spoke of her mother going to the temple often. Her mother's one goal was to have each of her five children "safely in their temple covenants" and sealed to an eternal companion. Her mother's love for the temple created a great desire in her children's hearts to attend the temple. Sister Rasband invited the missionaries to "teach with the end in mind" meaning to envision the people they teach entering the holy temple. She invited the missionaries to help them work toward the goal of being sealed as a family. Sister Rasband reminded everyone that Heavenly Father answers the prayers of His devoted missionaries. She finished her message with expressions of love and encouragement for the missionaries as she said, "In almost every prayer we give, we pray for the missionaries."

Then Elder Rasband spoke for the remainder of the devotional. Elder Rasband began, "We are here to dedicate a temple of the Lord. I was sent here by a Prophet of God. A lot of the world is rejoicing about this temple. We live in a darkened world, but I know on Sunday the heavens will part as the Lord smiles on Bangkok, Thailand." He asked the missionaries to ask Heavenly Father what He would want them to know from the experience of being part of the temple dedication. Elder Rasband had the missionaries read Doctrine & Covenants 109:22-23:

And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth, that they may know that this is thy work, and that thou hast put forth thy hand, to fulfil that which thou hast spoken by the mouths of the prophets, concerning the last days.

Then Elder Rasband had the missionaries read verse 39:

And whatsoever city thy servants shall enter, and the people of that city receive their testimony, let thy peace and thy salvation be upon that city; that they may gather out of that city the righteous, that they may come forth to Zion, or to her stakes, the places of thine appointment, with songs of everlasting joy.

Elder Rasband went on to tell the missionaries, “You are here by revelation. I know you are here by revelation ... We are gathering the elect right now.”

He taught the missionaries of the importance of their call to the Thailand Bangkok Mission, and that their assignment of where they would serve had been given under inspiration by a member of the Twelve Apostles. He spoke of the priesthood keys President Burgener held to preside over the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Then Elder Rasband shared how he had met with President Russell M. Nelson before he traveled to Thailand. President Nelson had asked Elder Rasband to share a message with the missionaries from the First Presidency. President Nelson said, “Please tell the missionaries that “We love you!” Elder Rasband continued, “We love you Elders and Sisters! Nearly every member prays for you. The Lord loves you!” Next, President Nelson said, “We thank you! This is a church of volunteerism.” Lastly, President Nelson said, “We need you! We need you now, and we need you every day for the rest of your lives.”

At the end of the meeting, Elder Rasband gave an Apostolic blessing to all the missionaries. He said, “In the office of the holy Apostleship, I ask Heavenly Father to bless you with the same power and efficacy as if my hands were on your heads individually. I bless your families, children, grandchildren, those you love most.” He blessed the missionaries with health and strength and a burning desire to feast on the words of Jesus Christ. He taught the missionaries that they are the Apostles’ fellow servants in bringing souls unto Jesus Christ. (These excerpts from Elder and Sister Rasband’s messages to the missionaries were taken from Sister Burgener’s personal notes.) President and Sister Burgener and all the missionaries felt extremely blessed to be in the presence of one of the Lord’s chosen Apostles, Elder Ronald A. Rasband, and his dear companion, Sister Melanie Rasband, on this historic day.

On Saturday, October 21, the evening before the temple dedication, Elder Ronald A. Rasband held a dinner and meeting with Church leaders from the 11 countries in the Bangkok Thailand Temple District. Elder Rasband felt it was important to gather the leaders together so they could attend the temple dedication and see the strength of the Church in their area of the world.

After dinner, Elder and Sister Rasband shared messages with the leaders. Elder Rasband shared a similar message from President Russell M. Nelson. He quoted President Nelson who said, “We want you to know we love you! We thank you for all the

good you do! We need you!” Elder Rasband continued, “There are 11 countries represented here tonight. This is the largest temple district in the world. We need you to teach the members to love the Lord their God with all their heart. Also teach them to love their neighbor and keep God’s commandments every day. May our experiences tomorrow during the dedication of the temple be something that lasts a lifetime.”

Elder Rasband asked for a missionary choir to be part of the program that night. President and Sister Burgener asked Elder Lee and Sister Marie Tarbet, a senior missionary couple serving in Ubon, to organize the choir. With not much time to practice, the missionaries sang beautifully that night. They sang “Redeemer of Israel” for the opening hymn, “I Love to See the Temple” in Thai and English as the special musical number, and “I Am a Child of God” as the closing number. Elder Rasband asked the audience to sing the last verse with the choir in each person’s native language. The Spirit was very strong as everyone sang together.

One other blessing for President and Sister Burgener was the opportunity to see President Tiengsack Inthavong, the branch president of the Vientiane Branch in Laos, and his wife, Kongnang “Kung.” President and Sister Burgener met Yan “Fawn” Shin, the branch president of the Yangon Branch in Myanmar, and his wife, Myat Myat Soe for the first time in-person. They were also able to be with President “Paul” Suan, the branch president of the North Dagon Branch in Myanmar, and his wife “Ruth” who they had met previously in Thailand. These good men are the priesthood leaders in their countries of Laos and Myanmar, and because of this, President Burgener had asked for them to be included in this important meeting for priesthood leaders.

On Sunday, October 22, 2023, the long-awaited day had arrived. The Bangkok Thailand Temple was dedicated by Elder Ronald A. Rasband. Two dedicatory sessions were held. There was a spirit of rejoicing and gratitude among everyone who attended. The temple and the annex were filled with members and leaders. All the members in Bangkok came to the Annex for the dedication. Members living outside of Bangkok watched the dedication online with their wards and branches. The missionaries brought new members with them.

The temple grounds were overflowing with members, missionaries, and guests. Many of the former mission presidents and their wives came to the dedication. Elder Ronald A. Rasband shared that as he was writing the dedicatory prayer, he learned all he could about the history of the Church in Thailand. He also learned about the history of the country and its culture. One member who attended the dedication in the celestial room of the temple, later stated that the Spirit was so strong during the dedicatory prayer.

During the Hosannah Anthem that preceded the Hosannah Shout, the choir sang the stirring words that begin the beloved hymn, “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning.” As the choir sang, the guest said the volume of the hymn was much louder than the choir of 8 or 10 people could produce. The guest said it truly was like angels were

singing with the choir and adding to their volume. This Sunday was one never to be forgotten for the members and missionaries in the Thailand Bangkok Mission. President and Sister Burgener felt much gratitude for the blessing of serving in Bangkok when the temple was dedicated.

The crowning event of the month and year was the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple. President Burgener testified that a growing strength would begin and spread throughout the members in Thailand as they came to the temple and received their own endowment, made covenants with God and kept those covenants. The missionaries had been blessed tremendously by the opportunity to meet with Elder and Sister Rasband for a mission devotional. The missionaries had been taught by an Apostle and given an Apostolic blessing to carry on the work of the Lord in Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos. Elder Rasband promised the missionaries that this verse would be true in their live.

And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them. [Doctrine & Covenants 109:22]

Bangkok Thailand Temple Dedication Experience

By Julie Barker Farr

“No ray of sunlight is ever lost, but the green which it awakes into existence needs time to sprout, and it is not always granted to the sower to see the harvest. All work that is worth anything is done in faith.”

I memorized this quote from Albert Schweitzer while I was serving in the Bangkok Thailand Mission in 1980-1981 under the leadership of President Clyde T. Lowe. There were times back then that I wasn't sure I would live long enough to see the harvest; but I have been blessed to see the harvest in a beautiful way, though it was decades in the making. What follows is my experience.

About ten years ago I was in Asia with several family members when we made a quick side trip to Thailand where I had served my mission. I was delighted to go to the new mission office, and as I stood on that beautiful spacious piece of property in such a prime location, I told my family, “This is going to be the location for our Thailand temple”. Each conference after that I watched in anticipation, waiting for the announcement. It happened on April 5th, 2015, and I was thrilled! My husband I talked about my desire to be there when this House of the Lord was dedicated, and I watched for updates as the temple was built.

The difficult part about planning to attend temple open houses or dedications, is in the timing! A lot of planning and work goes in from the announcement to the dedication, and delays are not uncommon and there are no preset dates. By the time the open house and dedication dates were set for the Bangkok Temple, a prior commitment looked like it would prevent us from being able to attend. I was so torn, as I had looked forward to this event for years. Surprisingly, our schedule cleared not long before the open house and I quickly began putting a trip together. The most immediate decision was whether to join former missionary companions at the beginning of the open house, or go by ourselves in hopes of being able to attend a dedicatory session later on. There is a long enough gap between the open house and the dedication that it makes a considerable time element to do both. There were no promises that we would even be able to get dedication tickets, while the open house was a sure thing with a companion I had not seen in decades and former missionaries that I knew. I had always felt the strongest desire to be there for the dedication, and I came to the conclusion that even if we were not able to attend a dedicatory session or even see the inside of the temple, it would be enough for me to stand on holy ground and watch members with recommends, not only from Thailand, but throughout Asia, enter the temple. I had served refugees on my mission from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, and had developed a love for these countries as well. To think these countries, once torn by war, now had a temple was miraculous.

Not only did I have a great desire to be there in Thailand, I felt that here was a purpose why I should go to the dedication. I saw tender mercies and miracles even before we got

there. The first, that the way opened up that my husband and I could even go. The second, was a personal sweet sign for me. Since my mission I have always loved tropical flowers, and have had several Anthurium's of different colors that remind me of Thailand. One of my favorite tropical flowers are Birds of Paradise, and several years ago I took a chance, bought one, and had been caring for it inside in a pot in hopes it would one day flower. I was told that they take 3-4 years to get the first bloom. To my astonishment, after over three years of care my Bird of Paradise developed two beautiful bright orange "birds", literally at the start of the Bangkok Thailand Temple open house! I looked at those beautiful blooms all through the open house while I received reports back from former missionaries who were attending. I looked forward to our own upcoming experience. One miracle came from preparing to return to Thailand by reading Reed B. Haslam's book "The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia", which is a history of our church in Asia's ancient kingdoms. It had been years since I had read about the earliest missionaries to Thailand and I was truly humbled by their stories. In particular, Elam Luddington, who was the first missionary to preach in Thailand touched me. As I thought about the harsh conditions he faced and his experiences, I was overwhelmed by the feeling of joy he must be experiencing in having a temple in Thailand. The next unexpected thought was, "I wonder if I am related to Elder Luddington?" I do a lot of research on FamilySearch, so I immediately went to the computer and found out that I am related to him through my maiden name Barker lines! He isn't a close relative, but he is my relative. The next immediate thought was, "I wonder if Elder Luddington has family that I am related to that haven't had their temple work done?" Within ten or fifteen minutes I had found three of his (our) relatives that had incomplete temple work. I reserved their names and had the impression that I could honor Elder Luddington, these family members should have ordinances done in the Bangkok Temple. I wasn't sure if my husband and I would be able to do that, but if not, I planned to leave the names in Thailand to have their work done when the temple opened. Planning a two-and-a-half-week international trip in such short timing was a challenge, but I planned the trip to arrive in Bangkok two days before the dedication and to stay long enough after the dedication in hopes that the temple would be open so we could do temple work before we left.

We arrived in Thailand around midnight on Thursday, Oct. 19th, and the train from the airport stopped at Makkasan Station, which provided us our first glimpse of the glowing beautiful Bangkok Temple at night. Our hotel was within walking distance of the station and the temple. It was a dream come true to see the temple and I was so excited! The next day we went to the mission home where I picked up a silver-colored necklace that I had preordered that had a picture of the Bangkok Temple on it. We had also ordered handkerchiefs that had embroidery of the temple in hopes that we could use them at the dedication. We made inquiries and were happy to hear that it looked promising that there would be room for former missionaries and their families in one of the dedicatory sessions. It was important to me that we not displace members who were in this new temple district, but thanks to the planned broadcasts of the dedication in the Temple Annex building as well as the Asoke Chapel it seemed there would be room for all. Our

names were put on the list. What joy! We were told when and how we could pick up our tickets. We spent the next couple of days exploring Bangkok...and the yummy food.

Saturday, we went at the appointed time to get our tickets and found out we were assigned the Sunday morning session in the Temple Annex Building. It was such a sweet experience showing our temple recommend and receiving a ticket that we then signed with our names. We had traveled to Thailand with the hope that we could attend the dedication, and receiving the tickets were such a precious gift! I have a picture of me holding my ticket at the office.

On Saturday evening, Oct 21st, we attended a Mission and Member Reception held at the Asoke Chapel. We were blessed to hear from previous mission presidents and their wives. My own president, President Clyde T. Lowe and his wife, had passed away many years ago, but it was a tribute to all who have helped build the church in Thailand. Though there were few people I knew, I was glad to attend for the beautiful spirit that was there. The Asoke Chapel also brought back so many memories of attending meetings, teaching piano there, and the mission office that was located at the back of the building up some stairs on the second level. It was fun to meet up with one of my cousins who served after me, Rob Dayley, who was there with his wife Carrie. That was a fun connection! Also, Anan Eldredge was there and I knew of him from my mission. He was the first male Thai member of the church. As I looked around the room at so many individuals who had given time and service my heart was full.

Sunday morning was a beautiful day! I had saved my necklace with the temple on it to be worn the first time at the dedication. We arrived early and the excitement and pure joy was palpable. As I neared the Temple Annex doors my husband took a picture of me before I entered; there were two young male Thai members holding the doors open for us. After we entered there were Thai members giving the traditional Wai to greet us- a graceful and respectful gesture of a slight bow, with the palms pressed together in a prayer-like fashion. Tears rolled down my face. What a privilege to be there for such a sacred event and how happy I was for the members of Southeast Asia to have a temple in their midst!

Elder Rasband, the Apostle assigned for the dedication, briefly stopped at the room we



Photo 1 -In the courtyard with other sisters

were in and waved to all of us. The temple dedication was beautiful and the speakers inspired. We were able to use our special handkerchiefs for the Hosanna Shout. I would urge everyone to read the dedicatory prayer. Truly prayers had been heard and prophecy fulfilled in the history of the church in Thailand and Southeast Asia, and there is so much more to come! Being there was such a blessing, and I

could hardly believe how everything seemed to have come full circle. It felt complete and whole.

When the dedication was over, members poured into the plaza between the temple and the annex building. There was so much joy as we hugged each other and shared this moment; I seriously looked to the heavens as I felt angels were looking on. There is a beautiful statue of Christ and many pictures were taken there. I met remarkable women from this new temple district, many of them who are pioneers in their countries. Their stories and their faith were inspiring. I have a picture of some of us in the courtyard; language barriers were overcome by love of the gospel. Leaders of the church from all over Asia were gathered and there was a power being in their presence. I loved conversing with the members from Thailand, particularly those who have been faithful these many years. Former missionaries, like myself, stared in awe at the temple, as this is what we had labored for: First branches, then wards, and then stakes, and then a temple! How many missionaries, members, and church leaders had all worked to make this a reality!

We lingered so long on the temple grounds that the second session members started to arrive. We were told by one of the church leaders that the Asoke Chapel would have plenty of room if we wanted to attend the second session, and of course, we did! We could attend there by showing our temple recommends and it wasn't too far away. We arrived at the chapel, which was another tender moment of memories. I could hardly believe that the chapel I attended in in the early 1980's was now a gathering place for a temple dedication! As the time came for the session there were only a handful of us, mainly former missionaries with their family members. The broadcast experienced difficulties and so we were invited to quickly follow our temple volunteer hosts back to back to the multipurpose building where we attended the first session. Many of the speakers were different than the first session, so it made this session a special experience, too! Of course, the dedicatory prayer was the same, but Elder Rasband's personal remarks were different as well. I could tell that he was led by the spirit at both dedications. It was a unique experience attending two dedicatory sessions on the same day.

Once again, when the session ended there was a large gathering in the plaza. The same excitement was present, and so much LOVE. The gospel of Jesus Christ brought us each together from our different countries and with our many languages, and yet we were as one. Had I not been able to attend the dedications and had just been there on the grounds, I still would have been glad I made the decision to go. It was that meaningful.



Photo 2 - Julie with Sister Asif from Pakistan

and had all been sold. They were leaving for the airport for their return flight to Pakistan. I looked at Sara's beautiful face with the light she carried, and I knew I needed



Photo 3 -Prisca with the Temple Necklace

to give my necklace to her. This was the necklace I cherished, as I had worn it to both dedication sessions. Would I even be able to find another for myself? But I thought of Sara returning to her daughter without the gift, and how difficult it would be for her to find one from Pakistan. Carrie helped me undo the clasp and I put it around Sara's neck. I have a precious picture of Sara and I with the necklace around her neck. I imagined her daughter's excitement to welcome them home, and I knew I had done the right thing. Any tears were tears of gratitude that I was in the right place at the right time to hand over this gift. I had been so blessed on this trip, and now I had the opportunity to bless someone else. I trusted that I would be able to find another necklace, and even if it took a while and I was home, it would be easier for me than Sara. Rob helped put the word out at the mission office and to those who had arranged the necklaces, and I trusted that God would provide.

My husband and I set out on our travels to Angkor Wat, Northern Thailand, and Krabi. Part of our travels were with a former missionary, Dean Brown, his wife Debbie, and their adult son, Matt. We didn't know them before the trip, but were we ever lucky! They were fun, organized, and Dean's Thai was helpful! We traveled to Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Northern Thailand with them. Some sites in Thailand I had seen, but many were new and amazing.



Photo 4 -The pendant of the Temple Necklace

Our flight home from BKK was scheduled on Nov. 2, so the hope was that the temple would open and we might be able to do Elder Luddington's family's temple work before we left. We knew that when the temple opened that members within the temple district should have first priority, and we didn't want to infringe on that; but if appointments happened to come available, we wanted to be watching for them online. Part way through our travels we were notified that the temple would be opening for appointments two days before we left! There were enough openings available that I was able to schedule Initiatory, Endowment, and a Sealing session the evening of Nov. 1. We would then have time to change at the hotel, and make it to the airport for our 2 AM flight on Nov. 2nd. What a blessing! We left the U.S. not knowing if we would be able to attend the dedication or the temple...and now we were able to experience both!

Dennis and I finished our travels going to Krabi on our own. I was able to swim, horseback ride, boat, and experience a part of Thailand that was new to me. Oh, how I love Thailand!

We arrived to Bangkok from Krabi to stay at the same hotel we did previously, which was a short walk to the mission home and the temple. We stopped at the mission home on our way to the hotel, in hopes that a necklace with the temple on it had been found. My cousin Rob and texted me that he had found one in the US and was having it sent to our home, but I still hoped to have one to wear to the temple that night. The Sister at the desk looked and looked but couldn't find anything. I just couldn't give up as I knew members had been looking for me and I trusted the Lord could provide! She kept looking in different closets and desks, when at last she found an envelope with my name on it that had one! It was certainly a reminder of how we are blessed many times over than what we give, and it was a beautiful tender mercy to me. I had a necklace to wear to the temple and another arrived after we were home. Talk about being doubly blessed!

There couldn't have been a better way to end our trip than doing ordinances at the newly opened Bangkok Temple. We arrived in the early evening for our appointments, and we were able to make all three appointments as scheduled. It was very tender doing temple work in behalf of Elder Luddington's family. I can't help but think of the Schweitzer quote and ponder how long Elder Luddington waited in order to see the harvest, but he did, and through his work and faith he blessed my life and he has blessed numerous others, including his own family.

There were several tender mercies that night in the temple. In the Sealing session we were with a Thai brother, and another couple who were from the U.S. The husband had a quizzical look and started asking questions. My husband thought he looked familiar.

Come to find out, they had served at the same time in the Kobe Japan mission and they were in the same apartment for six months! Elder Grant Andersen and my husband had not seen each other since their missions. What a tender reunion that was!



Photo 5 - Julie at the north door to the temple. Note the reflection of the Christus Statue on the left door.

We were both touched by diligent Thai temple workers who were doing an amazing work in a language not their own for people like us. This was all new and some of it difficult for them, but their amazing spirit, humility, and excitement in the work made for an even more beautiful experience. I had gone this entire time in Thailand and yet had not met any sisters I had served with or knew well. To my joy, one of the ordinance workers was Sister Varaporn. I couldn't believe it when I saw her and recognized her. Though she had not been my companion, she had been the companion of my MTC companion once we were in Thailand. We all knew and loved Sister Varaporn. To meet her after 40 years in the temple could not have been sweeter! After we had completed all of our appointments, we lingered in the Celestial Room until the temple closing time. The overwhelming thought was how complete everything felt. Everything had come full circle to this moment in time.

As we were exiting the dressing room, we ran President Wisit Khanakham and his wife,

Matron Sumamaan. They have been long time members, and the missionaries and members all have great respect for this couple. He knew how much it meant to me that we were able to do temple work for Elder Luddington's family, and we talked about our sweet experience. He asked if we could linger in the temple courtyard while he and his wife closed the temple for the night, so we could visit more. As we stood in the courtyard with the beautiful tropical flowers and glowing Christus statue, I saw the lights extinguished in the temple floor by floor. Tears welled up as I reflected back on this miracle trip that was more than I could have ever hoped for. We would be leaving Thailand in just hours, and I savored this moment in time as a spirit of gratitude and love washed over me. Gratitude that I had served a mission to Thailand and had been blessed with this experience, love for the Thai people and other people of Southeast Asia I had served, love for the temple, and love for my Savior and Heavenly Parents. In return, I have seldom felt so loved.

We visited in the courtyard where President Wisit shared his conversion and other stories with us of how he and Sister Sumamaan were prepared for this time. He happened to see President Sanit and his wife and Sister Varaporn and her husband as they were leaving, and he invited them all over so that we could have a picture together.

This was my last treasured picture in Thailand. This temple district is in beautiful hands with inspired leadership.

We made in back to our hotel room to quickly change and headed to Makkasan Station for the Skytrain to the airport. I was able to watch the temple with its beautiful night lighting until it faded from sight, and just hours later did the same for the city of Bangkok as we ascended into the clouds. Faded memories returned of a flight leaving Bangkok over 40 years ago with the not uncommon question of a missionary, “Did I make a difference?”. I was but one rough pebble and I could have done more, but the Lord let me see how his work is greater than our imperfections. On this return visit I received healing, completion, and joy. “All work that is worth anything is done in faith”, and we can be assured that sowers will see the harvest, and whether it be now or later, it’s worth watching and waiting for. The reward is sweet.

The Open House and Dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple

By Ronald Grover

We arrived in Bangkok a few weeks prior to the Open House. Our first glimpse of the lit up Temple from the window of our nearby condo was breathtaking and a portend of a wonderful experience to come. Over the next few days, we were able to walk around the grounds and view the Temple from the upper floors of the Annex. We could hardly believe it was actually finished and that we were there to witness it.

We were happy that our son, who had previously served here, was able to see the Temple with his family, although they were unable to stay for the Open House. Our daughter was serving here when President Monson announced the Temple (one of those that Elder Cook told of jumping on the beds when they heard the news). She was able to go through the Open House with us, then again the next day when a non member friend (former exchange student we had met in Idaho Falls) attended with us. She was excited to be able to go inside, as she had walked past the Idaho Falls Temple often and wondered what it was like.

Following this, we had the opportunity to help serve during the rest of the Open House. Our first day greeting and welcoming attendees was special. Everyone was grateful to be there. A couple of young ladies had been walking past daily, observing the construction for 3 years, and were among the first to reserve a spot to attend. Another time we met a man with many questions. He had lived near the Seattle Temple for 5 years, but recently returned to Bangkok and came to see it. One of my favorite experiences was seeing a father holding his young daughter's hand as they walked up to the Temple. After going through, they just sat in the courtyard for the longest time, not seeming to want to leave. Another time, a foreign family came through together. Afterward, the daughter couldn't stop hugging her parents as they stood in the courtyard, holding hands and looking into each other's faces.

Another choice experience was when we served in the hallway of the third floor, near the special painting that seemed to say "the light shines forth". I couldn't take my eyes off of it, as it appeared that the Savior was beginning to come down from the clouds, in that light, to shower His blessings on the land.

We then had the privilege of serving two consecutive shifts in a Saturday in one of the sealing rooms, since we could both speak Thai or English. I repeated the intro probably 75 times, but never tired of it. My wife, Nillawan, was also able to witness to them regarding the sacred nature and importance of the sealing ordinance. Some were so excited, that they wanted to know how they could be sealed now, so we were able to refer

them to the missionaries. Another sacred experience was the chance to serve in the Celestial room. One group that came through were members from Cambodia. They were so happy to be there and glad that we could retell the intro in English for them. It was so sweet to see them sitting in the Celestial room with their little children. Many came and just wanted to sit quietly and feel the sacredness and peace in that room. Then as the night shift was about to end, they sent in groups of missionaries who had been helping to sit and pray. They didn't want to leave and we were glad to extend our shift a little for them to have that experience.

The entire Open House, no matter where we served, was amazing. We met so many wonderful people and we able to reconnect with many former missionaries and members that we had served with. It was special for my wife to be able to see many of the children that she taught in Primary 35-40 years ago. So many people were touched by their experience in the Temple. Some were there because they were curious, some impressed by the beauty, but others, you could see in their face, that they had been touched by the Spirit. The organizers worked hard to try to help everyone have a good experience. We were also blessed that it didn't rain until evening if the last day, though we were right in the middle of the rainy season. It was a tiring, but wonderful blessing to take part in serving for those two weeks.

It's hard to imagine a more Spiritual experience in the Temple, but the Dedication proved to be so. We were blessed to be able to be inside the Temple for the Dedication. Elder Rasband came into our room to greet and thank us for attending and promised that we would have a wonderful experience. A really sweet moment before the program was when he called Sister Thongkorn (Sister Srilaksana's daughter) up to visit. He put his arm around her and talked for a good five minutes, thanking her for her faithfulness and for that of her dear mother. It was difficult to find a dry eye anywhere. The talks were so good and Elder Rasband's Prayer was beautiful. The choir was icing on the cake. They were terrific and it was a challenge to not choke up while trying to sing "The Spirit of God" with them. It was amazing to see so many people in the courtyard afterward. The joy and happiness lit up their faces and was a sight to behold. Nobody felt the urge to leave early. It felt like a preview of the Celestial Kingdom. Being able to attend one of the first available sessions with a roomful of members and doing so entirely in Thai, was a great way to cap off this choice event. We feel blessed and privileged to have been able to participate in such a wonderful experience.

Open House of the Bangkok Thailand Temple August 24 - September 5, 2023

By Reed B. Haslam Saturday, August 26, 2023

I first arrived in Thailand on August 11, 1973, as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My fourth return to Bangkok was on August 26, 2023, just over 50 years after my first arrival. My flight from Taipei arrived at about 9:30 a.m. in Bangkok. Suvarnabhumi Airport looked like a ghost town. I only saw old Thai International Airlines planes parked around the airport. The airport seemed deserted, but it must have just been a slow time of the day. After determining which group of transportation providers I had signed up with, I was off to my hotel. I hoped to walk around the temple and visit the multipurpose building this afternoon.



Photo 1- The Thailand Bangkok Temple from the roof of my hotel.

I left the hotel for the 10-minute walk up Asoke to the Subway Station on the south side of New Phetchaburi Road. I decided to go down into the subway to (a) find cooler air and (b) avoid any crazy drivers at the Asoke-New Phetchaburi intersection.



Photo 2 - Selfie in front of the Temple

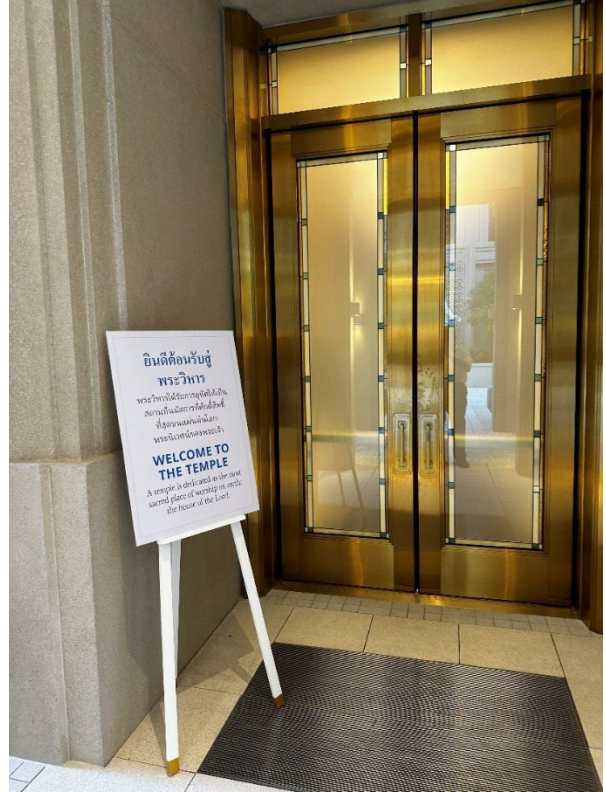


Photo 3- Rear Door to the Temple - Signage in Place



Photo 4- Bangkok Thailand Temple Cornerstone



Photo 5 - Water Feature at Front Steps to the Temple

The Bangkok subway system has numerous shops as you walk along on level 1. Coming up the escalator from level 1 on the north side of New Phetchaburi Road, I was just around the corner from “Bangkok’s Temple Square.” The temple and the multipurpose building were built on a lot of land that was anything but square, yet this is Temple Square in Bangkok.

I walked around from the front side of the temple and arrived at the main entrance to the multipurpose building. The first three floors all have this lovely lobby area in the center of the south side of the building. I sat down in the lobby. I introduced myself to a sister sitting nearby. Her response was, “You are Reed Haslam. The one who wrote the book?” I affirmed that I was indeed the author.



Photo 6 - Photo in front of the Christus Statue in the Courtyard. This spot may have been the most photographed of any in Bangkok during the Open House and Dedication

There is signage in the multipurpose building for the Open House, which starts on September 1. The distance between the temple and the multipurpose building is perhaps forty feet. As usual, the Open House temple tour begins at the Stake Center (in this case, the multipurpose building).

Sunday, August 27, 2023

I’ll attend the Asoke Ward at 9:00 a.m. and the International Ward at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Seeing how much the Church had grown in Thailand was a true joy today. After 50 years, the country now has four stakes (Bangkok, Bangkok North, Bangkok West, and Ubon) and two districts (Udon (Northeast) and Chiangmai (North)).

Former mission president Michael Smith was the first to greet me at 9:00 a.m. for the sacrament service of the Asoke (Thai Speaking) ward.

The meeting filled the chapel area. I started to notice how much Thai I had forgotten in the fourteen years since I last visited. I did not catch everything the speakers said. The multipurpose building continues to amaze me. There are two chapels in the building. Both chapels are in the center of each floor, on the first and third floors. Today, meetings were held on the third floor as Elder Gong will speak in the first-floor chapel this evening. There are two chapels in the building. Both chapels are in the center of the building, on the first and third floors. Before the meeting started, I spoke with Anun Eldredge (the first Thai to serve as a missionary and mission president). He greeted me warmly. I was shocked to find that the Chapel and the overflow area (about half the size of the overflow (gym) in the United States) were also full! Some couples planning to be temple workers transferred their membership records to Thailand and recently augmented the size of the international ward. Nonetheless, this was the largest audience I'd ever seen at a sacrament service in Thailand. Fifty years ago, the International Branch in Bangkok had only 50-75 foreign members (mostly U.S. military personnel) living in Bangkok.



Photo 7 - Chapel 3rd Floor - 1st Floor Identical



Photo 8- Overflow - Half Court Gym

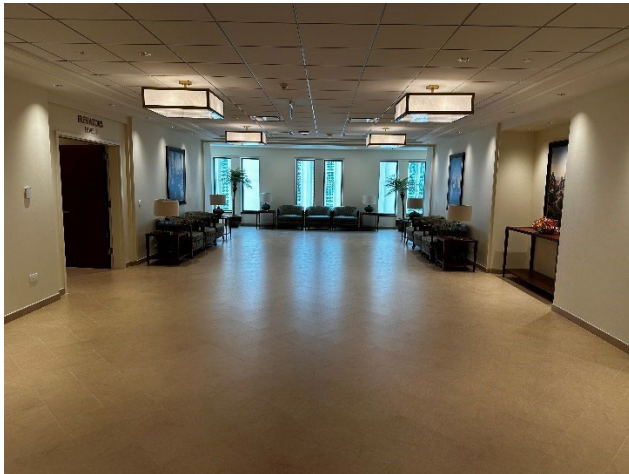


Photo 9 - Lobby near center on 2nd floor (3rd floor Identical)



Photo 10 - Large classroom on the first Floor. TV placement a challenge for old building, but this one is new.

The senior missionaries in the greater Bangkok area attend the Asoke Ward in Bangkok or the Changwattana English Speaking ward in the Bangkok North Stake. In my day, we had no senior missionaries. For half of my mission, there are also no sister missionaries. Thailand had yet to be certified as an appropriate place for sister missionaries to serve. While some of the International Ward comprises American families, others include British and Chinese. A young man sat behind me. He works for Western Digital Corporation, whose disk drives are manufactured in Thailand. He was just in Bangkok on a business trip from the United States.

After the sacrament meeting, I met up with Dave Rockwood. He's been doing business in Thailand for over twenty-five years. We went off to the Elder's Quorum meeting together. Things were confusing today since we were using the third rather than the first floor. The layout of the other rooms on the third floor turned out to be different from the first floor. It took a good 15 minutes to get the second-hour meetings started. The Elder's Quorum instructor spoke about making commitments to temple attendance.

At the end of the meeting, Elder Tyler Haslam came up and introduced himself to me. We had been connected through President Burgener several months ago. He showed me his genealogy, which ties him to the Haslams who settled in Cache Valley. My ancestors are the Haslams who settled in North Salt Lake. Both lines return to the Manchester, England, area; thus, our genealogies eventually join.

After the meetings, I had lunch with President Eldredge, his wife, and David Rookwood at the nearby FX hotel. Mark Tippetts, his wife, and Brother and Sister White were also at a nearby table. I learned much about Dave's business acumen over the next few hours. Later, Mark Tippetts joined us. Our discussion lasted until 4:45 p.m. when we decided to walk back to the multipurpose building for the 6:00 p.m. meeting with Elder Gong.

The Chapel on the first floor was about one-third full when we arrived. David Rockwood shared with me some crazy things that he experienced on his mission. These included a snake bite and riding his bike into a canal when the board bridge failed. At 5 minutes to the hour, the church authorities came in with their spouses for the meeting. The speakers included Elder Johnson (of the Asia Area Presidency and former mission president in Thailand), the presidents of the three stakes in the Bangkok area, and the current mission president, followed by Sister Gong and Elder Gong. Their translators did a fine job translating their messages into Thai, but that task was not simple!

Temple President Wisit Khanakham was not on the stand during the meeting. I never saw him during my visit to Thailand, and no one explained where he was.

Elder Gong's remarks were: (1) the blessings of the temple will bring you joy, (2) they will bind you to Jesus Christ, and they will link families together. After the meeting, he offered to personally greet anyone who wanted to meet him in the courtyard outside between the temple and the multipurpose building.



Photo 11 - Elder Gong greeting people in the courtyard.

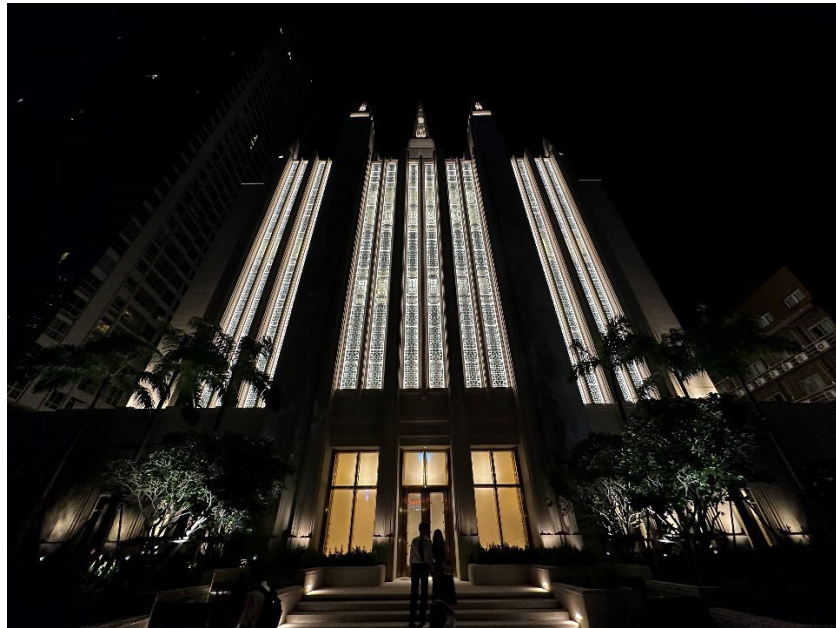


Photo 12 -- The front of the Temple at Night

Tuesday, August 28, 2023

At about 3:00 p.m., President Burgener texted me that this afternoon would be a good time for me to visit him. At about the same time, it started to rain outside. I decided to wait for the storm to pass by before taking the 10-minute walk to the multipurpose building. About 40 minutes later, the rain had tapered off and seemed about over. The local Doppler radar confirmed that it should end soon. As I left my hotel, I packed all eight copies of “The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia” in my carry-on bag and departed. I



Photo 13 - Elder Tyler Haslam with Reed Haslam

decided to take a hotel umbrella with me. Light rain continued all the way. As I entered the subway, the guard at the screening station put my umbrella in a cover so that water did not continue to drop from it to the floor. I left my umbrella in the umbrella stand when I reached the multipurpose building at parking level 1. It has become standard practice for me to walk down the west side of the temple to the underground parking lot and enter the multipurpose building at the elevator entrance.

I felt a friendship from the first time I interacted with President Burgener. Today was no different. I asked, “Do you work 18 hours a day, seven days a week?” He responded, “Yeah, that’s about right.” The Lord supports his efforts to keep up that pace continually.

We had hoped to facilitate a way for Thai members to contact the former missionaries they knew by sharing their photos and current email addresses. The temple

department said we can’t do any proselyting at temple open houses. I’m not sure how that is proselyting, but the temple department rejected the idea.

While at the office, I again found Elder Tyler Haslam from Tennessee. He’s the only other Haslam I’ve known to serve in Thailand. Elder Haslam (2023 edition) is serving as an assistant to President Burgener.

Thursday, August 31, 2023 - Day 2 of VIP Temple Tours

I received a special VIP tour of the Bangkok Thailand Temple on VIP day two. Former mission president Michael Smith invited me to join a small group tour with him. I was happy to be invited.

The Bangkok Thailand Temple is much smaller than it appears. Everything in Bangkok is vertically oriented, as the price per square meter of land is extraordinary. The temple is that way, too. While tall, it is not very deep, probably not more than 150 feet (46 m).

The inside is beautiful. The colors in the carpet on the ground floor were incredible. The recommended desk, visitor waiting area, offices, and the baptistry are on the ground floor. The water in the baptistry was clean and clear. Brother Walker, who documented

the construction of the Bangkok Thailand Temple with his wife, explained, “The water on Temple Square was clean and ready to drink. A system in the temple guarantees clean water everywhere.” Skipping floors 2 and 3, which Brother Smith told me are dressing rooms and initiatory only, we arrive at the fourth floor.

This floor accommodates two endowment rooms (each with 28 seats), the celestial room, and two sealing rooms (one large and one small). The “Lotus Flower” theme is a bit modern in the glass but stands out better in other representations.

My eyes watered as I contemplated the blessing many in Indochina would receive at the Bangkok Thailand Temple. It only took 50 years after I arrived as a missionary for this to become a reality. My heart rejoices.

Several of the VIP visitors brought flowers that were distributed around the multipurpose building.



Photo 14 - VIP Flower Donation



Photo 15- VIP Orchid Flower Donation

Friday, September 1, 2023 - First Day of the Public Open House

I was at Temple Square Bangkok this morning for the opening of the public open house. Many old heads (old missionaries) returned, and some younger heads were also present. Soon, the classroom where they were to show the introductory movie was full, so they moved us and others to the Chapel on the 1st floor for the movie presentation.

The movie was rather long, well over 10 minutes. Once the movie ended, they started to pull rows of people from the Chapel for the tour. Those going on the Temple Tour had to be broken up into groups of about fourteen people so that the whole group could fit in the elevator. Everything flowed well from then on. Unlike the VIP tour, we took an elevator to the third floor. Here, we did see the bride’s room and some of the sisters’ locker area. The bride’s room seems to be a must-stop on every temple tour. From there,

we climbed the stairs to the 4th floor, where we found the rooms for the endowment and sealing ordinances. Each endowment room seats 28 patrons.



Photo 16- Electronic Billboard -Open House Advertisement in the Bangkok Subway (also in Thai)

The signage was excellent in Thai and English. You could take extra time in a room as you felt necessary, as was done at the Saratoga Springs Utah Temple Open House. Just as we finished on the fourth floor, my new best friends, Elder and Sister Tippets, were there. Elder Tippets suggested that I take his place for a few minutes by opening the door to the stairway to allow visitors a path to the ground floor, which I did, and then just hung around to help for the rest of the 9 a.m.-1 p.m. shift.

While in Bangkok, I became acquainted with several Facebook friends I had never met. The way that happened, of course, was that they introduced themselves to me. I have 200 or more Thai Facebook friends. These chance meetings, of course, were simply delightful.

The opening hour and a half were busy, but things slowed down while picking up as lunch approached. Congratulations to the Temple Open House Committee for developing a solid plan to make it possible for people to see all the usual areas one sees at a temple open house and doing so in a very vertical temple.

The Missionary Reunion at the Oldest Chapel - Asoke

The Published Agenda for the Missionary Reunion on September 1, 2023

Date: Friday, September 1, 2023

Time: 5:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m.

Location: Asoke Church Building, 72 Soi Chulindr, Sukhumvit 21 Road, Vadhana, Bangkok 10110

Returned Missionary Reunion Program:

5:00 p.m. Registration, Name Tags Assign

5:30 p.m. Testimony Session

Guest Speakers: 10 minutes for each couple

1. President and Sister Anan Eldredge (TBM 1998-1991)
2. President and Sister Larry R. White (TBM 1991-1994)
3. President and Sister Michael S. Smith (TBM 2009-2012)

6:30 p.m. Dinner and Social

On September 1, the Bangkok Thailand all-missionary reunion event was held at the old Asoke meeting house—the first-ever reunion for all former missionaries was held at the Asoke Chapel, ten minutes from “Temple Square.” I had been informed that the



Photo 17 - A street sign points to Asoke Chapel



Photo 18 -Chapel with new skyscrapers in back



Photo 19 - Reed Haslam at Asoke Chapel



Photo 20 - Asoke Chapel from the Southwest



Photo 21 - Second Floor added in 1976.

multipurpose building could not be used for this event because the Temple Department prohibited it. The Asoke Chapel was completed in 1972, with local funds mostly coming from Latter-day Saints who lived and worked in the Bangkok area during the war in Vietnam. The Church moved the mission offices into a new second-floor addition to the Asoke Chapel in 1976. I visited the chapel as it probably won't be around much longer. It has now passed fifty years of service. The Church's goal for a building is fifty years. After that, they are usually willing to move on.

After a short walk from my hotel, I arrived a few minutes past 5:00 p.m. The original event was to include a check-in to receive a name tag. Hey, that's the way we do it in the States, but there were no name tags.

I've never attended a mission reunion where the program started with one and a half hours of speakers, but this one did.

At about 5:22 p.m., Elder Chaichana started the meeting. The Asoke chapel and overflow were nearly full of participants. He invited any missionaries who had arrived in Thailand before President Morris to come to the stand, and they all had a chance to say a few words.

As the Area Authority Seventy living in Thailand, Elder Chaichana shared his view of the growth of the Church in Thailand and the importance of the new Bangkok Thailand Temple. He spoke of the long wait for a temple to open in Bangkok. He was baptized in 1976, the year after I returned home. His wife was baptized before I first arrived.

Next, he showed an outstanding video presentation of the history of the Church in Thailand, featuring many photos that I knew well and adding a few new ones I had never seen. The presentation included the dates missionaries had first been sent to various cities. When it came to President Morris's time, the list of cities opened was lengthy and included the town I opened, "Chaoengsao," which was closed six months after I left, and I doubt it has ever had missionaries assigned there since then.

Eventually, the presentation was past 2012, the year my book was printed, and then the material was all new.



Photo 22 - The Oldest Heads prepare to speak.



Photo 23 - The Full Audience after the meeting started.

Following Elder Chaichana, he invited three mission presidents to speak, starting with Anun Eldredge, who recently returned with his wife to serve in the temple. Brother Anun has a beautiful voice and great clarity in spoken Thai. It was clear that he loved to speak. He took jabs at Larry White and Michael Smith in turn. They were the other two former mission presidents to speak. He talked about being among the earliest Thais to receive

baptism and the joy he had while he served as a mission president in his own country [To this day, he remains the only native Thai to serve as mission president.]



Photo 24 - Elder Chaichana



Photo 25 - President Eldredge



Photo 26 - President Smith



Photo 27 - President White with his Missionaries - Largest Group at this reunion

Larry White was next to speak. As one of the first Elders who met Sister Srilaksana, he told a little about her story. In my book “Translating Scripture: The Thai Book of Mormon,” I recount her story in detail. I included most of that book in Chapter 3 of the Thailand section of “The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia.” Sister Sri was the mother to early church members in Thailand.

Michael Smith was the last speaker as President Burgener was busy receiving a new set of missionaries. He also spoke of his days as a missionary and the challenges of those

times. He reflected on the importance of a Temple in Thailand and the blessings it would bring. Larry White had all his missionaries on the stand at one point for a photo opportunity. They filled the seats on the stand. It appeared that perhaps just over half of them were native Thais. For the native Thai missionaries, this was their reunion. They sang “Called to Serve” together, which must have been a mission tradition.

Then, out of the blue, Elder Chaichana called upon me to say a blessing on the food. I was as unprepared as I could be at this moment in time. Recently, I’ve thought about the words I might use to say something in a meeting, but I had not rehearsed a Thai prayer in my mind in years. Let’s just say I stumbled through it as best I could, which I admit was not very well.

The food and socializing came next. Let me say this: Thai Sisters in the United States have prepared far better Thai food than the catering company provided this evening. We all paid thirty dollars in advance, and the food was nowhere near what we had expected.

Several couples from the late Morris and early Brown eras served as senior missionaries. On the 5th floor of the multipurpose building, there are apartments for about six such missionary couples. I did not expect to find these apartments inside the building.

I, Dave Rockwood, and Peter Wilden were among the missionaries who attended this reunion and served during the first two years of the Morris era. The total reunion attendance was about 250 missionaries, plus family members and others.

Sunday, September 3, 2023 - A visit to the branch in Ayutthaya

Forty-nine years ago, I served in Ayutthaya, which is located about seventy miles north of Bangkok on a major highway. My junior companion was Mani Seangsuwan, the fifth native Thai to serve as a missionary. I did my best gospel teaching while in Ayutthaya. About eight people (aged 16-24) were eventually baptized among those we shared the gospel with. So, rather than stay in Bangkok, I ventured out to Ayutthaya.

I hired a car and driver for just about \$100 to make the trip pleasant. We were off when he arrived in a late-model automobile at my hotel.

Today, the Ayutthaya branch is part of the Bangkok North stake. The area north of Bangkok has grown over the last 20 years as a place to manufacture technology goods, particularly disk drives.

I recognized little about Ayutthaya from my time as a missionary. Today, the road into town from the main highway is eight lanes wide—yes, I said “eight” lanes. Ayutthaya was the capital of Thailand from the mid-1300s to 1767, when the Burmese invaded and laid waste to the city. Numerous ruins from that era are still visible today.



Photo 28 - Ayutthaya - Fall 1974 - Investigators gather to travel to Bangkok. Four of the investigators pictured here were later baptized. Brother Bunja Thareerat and Elder Mani are on the far right.

The current branch has been meeting in a portion of a commercial building for several years. The location is near Wat Yia Chai Mongkol, a popular tourist venue. Thanks to today's mapping technology, finding the location was simple.

There were 35 members in attendance today. The branch acknowledged several baptisms of younger people recently and confirmed one new member during the meeting.

My former companion, Mani Seangsuwan, and his wife served here during one of their senior missions. I had not remembered this, but some members reminded me of it.

During the meeting, I shared my testimony in Thai. It went much better than the blessing on the food at Asoke the other evening,



Photo 29 - The Ayutthaya Branch September 2, 2023

Many of the branch members greeted me. They were surprised that someone would come from Bangkok to visit them. There were no breaks in those offering testimonies. They invited me to stay for lunch, and I did. The branch members invited my driver to have lunch as well. Their Thai food was excellent.

The branch president took a more formal photo of all those present. One member told me that he does this every week. It seemed like an excellent way to document those who attended each week.

Monday, September 4, 2023

I returned to the hub of excitement, Bangkok's Temple Square of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on New Phetchaburi Road. I offered to volunteer with the first shift (9 a.m. - 1 p.m.) this morning.



Photo 30 - With the Thareerat Family in 2010 at Asoke



Photo 31 - With Sister Jiraphinya Thareerat at the Christus Statue

I was first assigned to help visitors get around the first corner of the courtyard on their way to the temple. Doing this might sound like a poor assignment, but it was anything but that. First, I met again with Sister Jirapinya Thareerat, who was in the courtyard. I took the opportunity to get a photo with her. Later, she came by with her father Bunja on her phone, and I was able to say hello to him. Bunja and his wife are now living in Khon Kaen. Bunja was an officer in the Royal Thai Airforce.

Finding the daughter of a young man I helped teach in Ayutthaya 49 years ago, who was now a missionary herself, was the best heartwarming part of this trip to Thailand.

Another Thai sister came forward and recognized me from Facebook. I realized this must be another of my Thai Facebook friends. She was so excited she hugged me. Fifty years ago, giving a hug in public would have been outside cultural norms, but those norms have changed over the years.

Later, Elder Suchat Chaichana entered the room where I'd take refuge from the heat as long as no visitors approached my corner. His wife soon joined him. After their tour, people who came into the room engaged in Q&A with others. Before I knew it, two females had asked to talk with someone about the Church, so I got Sister Jiraphinya and her Filipino companion to come into the room and speak with them. When that was over, they met Brother Suchat and his wife. I could explain that I had taught her father in Ayutthaya. The sister missionaries were happy to make his acquaintance.

With an hour or so left in the shift, I was asked to replace another sister at the baptismal font inside the temple. It was 15-20 minutes after

the shift ended when Matthew Vogel, a supervisor, came to relieve me. Before I left, he told me he appreciated my books and would like to see them in e-reader formats.

Tuesday September 5, 2023

Today, Open House leaders asked me to usher in the endowment room. That was a sweet assignment because I could sit in a chair until I heard footsteps coming to the door, and then I would stand and smile as visitors entered the room.

Under current Church Temple Department guidelines, they want visitors to feel the temple's peace, calmness, and spirit. Thus, remarks are discouraged, but I could answer the visitor's questions.

While I was in the room, missionaries came in with investigators. The two of them shared comments and testimonies with those with them. Later, Elder Chaichana did something similar to the visitors who accompanied him.

One visitor who had visited the Washington D.C. Temple remarked that this temple was a true landmark in the capitol area. I explained that the Church hoped it would catch the attention of people working in embassies all over the city.

One gentleman asked what comes after this room. I explained that this room represented our world while the next one represented the world where God lived.

I'm guessing that the temple receives 650-1000 guests on weekdays, while Saturdays are much busier.

The temple will be a marvelous blessing to the members of the Church in Thailand and nearby countries.

Wednesday September 5, 2023

Today was my final day in Thailand. I volunteered to help at the Open House. It was nice that the Thai members could fill all required hosting locations today. I watched the refreshment/conversation room for those who stopped by after their tour.

So, members who brought friends came in, got some water, and talked about their experiences.

A young couple came in and told us they were members of the Roman Catholic Church. I could tell that what they had just seen was new and different. Along with a senior missionary, we chatted with them for about ten minutes. We affirmed that we believed in the same Jesus Christ but had more to offer, such as the work done in temples. We also chatted with them about continuing revelation. Hopefully, at a future date, they may come back looking for more information.

A Thai Sister handling the main front door at the Multipurpose building had to leave and asked Sister Eldredge to take her place. I noticed she was having trouble opening and closing the door, So I went over to check things out. Before long, I became the one handling the door!

I discovered that whoever installed the screws into the door frame of one of the main entry doors to the multipurpose building was not correctly aligned. I decided to close the working door and use the broken door to let people in and out. Just before my shift

ended at 1:00 p.m., I looked more closely at the door frame. About one-third of the screws in the frame had come loose or were never properly installed. Perhaps this was the first major mechanical failure since the Church took over the buildings on Temple Square.

I decided to go to the fourth floor for lunch. Soon after I arrived, Sister Jiraphinya and her companion from the Philippines arrived. In today's Bangkok Thailand Mission, there are numerous Filipino missionaries. I am so grateful for the opportunity to meet the daughter of a young man I taught in Ayutthaya 49 years ago. It was even better to find her serving a mission. I wish her all the best as she continues to serve as a missionary.

Next, it was back to the hotel to complete packing. I had dropped 28 pounds of books and 4 pounds of candy (for the Thai children's Halloween - Thai candy is not all that sweet). My bags would now be much lighter. Next was a chauffeured ride to Suvarnabhumi International Airport for the long trek home. As our plane, an Airbus A330 took off to the south, and the clouds parted long enough for me to see the mouth of the Chao Praya River, where it entered the Gulf of Thailand. That was sweet! Fourteen hours later, I would be in San Francisco and later back in the valley of the Great Salt Lake a while after that.

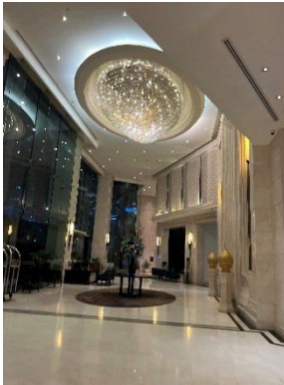
This trip was about (a) helping at the Open House, (b) meeting new people, and (c) strengthening existing friendships, particularly with Brother Bunja Thareerat and his family.

Dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple By John W. Montgomery



Thursday, October 19 Bangkok Arrival

We arrived in Bangkok on time, around 9:30 Thursday evening. I was hoping to meet Elder Khang's parents and sister, but they had already left. It must have been quite a reunion. Our bags arrived without a problem, and we caught a cab to the



*Grand Center Point
Lobby*



Our Room 1907

Grande Centre Point.

It is always a thrill returning to Bangkok. The vibrance, the humidity, the smells, the people, all of it make me feel glad to be alive

We were greeted as usual by the very attentive hotel staff taking our bags and ushering us through the

check-in process. Seemed like they knew me!

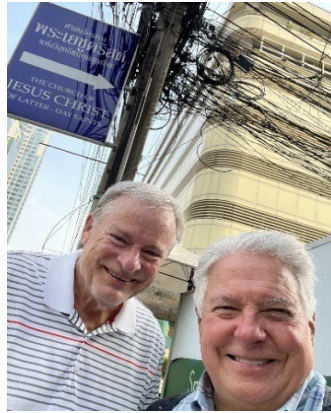
Thankfully room 1907 had two full sized beds. I had been worried that my original reservation for one king would have been awaiting us. We unpacked, changed, and went right to sleep.

Friday, October 20 Walk to Temple

It was a beautiful Friday morning. The view was outstanding. We had slept well and headed down to the 5th floor for an excellent breakfast. The breakfast is buffet style catering to the many cultures being served, Thai, Chinese, Indian, and Western. Each day I tried to be conservative but each my plate, plates, got more and more full.



Grand Center Point

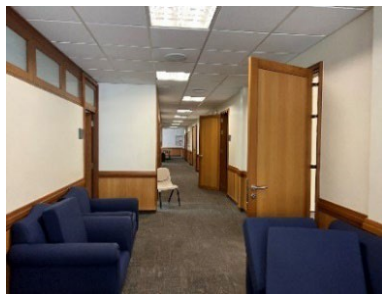


Chulindr Entrance



Asoke Chapel Entrance

Our primary objective for the day was to make our way to the multipurpose building behind the temple and get our dedication tickets from Noi Wisan, Wisan Wisanbanawit's wife. The morning was still cool as we began our walk up Soi Asoke to the Chulindr Lane



Main Hallway



Asoke Chapel



In front of the Asoke Chapel

chapel. Entering the chapel is always a pleasant experience. From the Asoke Chapel, we wandered north up Soi Asoke toward Phetchaburi Road.

Crossing the Bunruang Canal we shook our heads at the tangle of cable wiring hanging overhead. I'm just not sure how they manage that.

Reaching Phetchaburi, it's always a debate as to how to cross this very busy road. With cars, buses and motorcycles whizzing by, Ross bravely stepped into a gap in the traffic, and we made it across to the north side and stood next to a policeman manikin on a traffic island. Very realistic. In fact, I think Ross started talking to him!!



Ross with the fake policeman

A Visit to the Temple Annex

Making our way west up the block, we passed some old, weathered shops, behind which was the FX Hotel. We arrived at the temple. The grand structure of white marble



Jay and Ross arrive at the temple

certainly stands out in the community. We entered the main gate, where guards saluted us. We walked down the driveway and into the parking lot under the structure and greeted a group of missionaries milling about.

We took the elevator to the second floor, where we met an old friend, Wisan Wisanbannawit, who was very busy. We met Steve Stevens, a friend of our Vineyard neighbors, the Norlanders, who works for the church there. Behind the greeting counter were three women, including Noi Wisan, Wisan's wife, and a Facebook friend who I had never met in person. She is so very pleasant, and Dee Ann Davis Mitchell.

It was great fun meeting her. She

gave us our green temple dedication tickets, the color designating where we would be attending, the third-floor chapel, and when, Sunday afternoon. It's good thing they were signed!!



Sister Noi at the Temple Welcome Desk

I then asked her about the handkerchiefs custommade for the dedication.

I had asked for 10 several weeks ago from Wisan who had sent out an offer to provide them at \$2 each. Sandra Martell, a sister missionary who served with us back in the day, had asked that I pick up her 5 as well. Noi gave me a surprised look and said that she didn't think Wisan had any left for us. I showed her my confirming message from Wisan, and she rolled her eyes like I've seen my own wife do many times. She said that this was a project that got away from him. I laughed and said never mind, it wasn't a big deal. I showed the women the bags of gold and silver temple pins and necklaces I had gotten from Mark Tippetts and asked them to whom I should give them. All three had quizzical looks and didn't know. They suggested that I try across the room in the Distribution Center Store. Store? Who knew?

We went over and opened a rather non-descript door and lo and behold there was indeed a whole store selling and renting temple clothes and all kinds of other missionary materials. We bought a couple of plain handkerchiefs for the dedication ceremony and asked the clerks about the jewelry. They knew nothing about them.

When we left the store, we ran into Wisan and asked him what he thought we should do with

them. He said to take them up to the mission office on the fifth floor. Just before heading up on the elevator, we spotted our Vietnamese friend Elder Khang and his sister, Trang. It was a fun reunion. I introduced them to the three women and the welcome desk and explained who they were. They were given dedication tickets to the Asoke Chapel.

In his usual very friendly manner, Elder Khang asked what we were doing. They proceeded to join us as we headed to the mission office. There was a lot of activity at the mission office with many Elders and Sisters all engaged in excited discussions. It reminded me of when



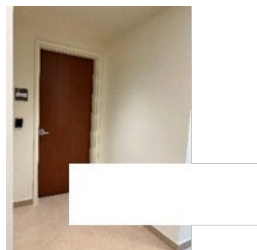
Elders and Sister Missionaries hanging around the Mission Office

Elders and Sisters all engaged in excited discussions. It reminded me of when our missionary group would get together after many months and were excited to swap stories.

An Elder Sarafian stepped up to me and said, “Brother Montgomery, it’s good to see you again.” I immediately recognized him as one of the Elders who was serving with Elder Tyler Haslam in whom I had met with Rangsan last March. He said they had met with Rangsan and his family several times, but he had been transferred. It was great to see him. I was so flattered that he had remembered me



Elder Anglesey receives the Temple jewelry



Senior Missionary Apartment - 5th Floor



Temple from the 5th Floor Patio

In the office, I started asking about the jewelry, and a Senior Elder Anglesey, came up to me and said he was the man and that they had been waiting for these.

We talked to him and his wife, who told us that they live in the Senior Missionary apartments on the sixth floor. I dropped by the Mission President’s office, but President Burgener wasn’t in. I’ve been trying to talk with him since March to get a sense of the missionary landscape here but haven’t been successful. If I was serious, I could do a Zoom call with him like he suggested months ago.

So off we went, with Elder Khang and his sister in tow, to explore the temple annex. We found the Senior Missionary quarters and a patio, where we took some temple pictures. Elder Khang then asked us what we were going to do now.

We said we would head to the river, take a sliver boat ride through the Thonburi canals, and invite them along. They went to change their clothes at the FX Hotel next door, and we soon met on the 6th Floor patio for our next adventure. adventure.

Missionary Reunion

We were excited to attend the Dedication Reunion which had been encouraged for missionaries serving before 1980. We left the hotel a little after 4, walking down Asoke to Chulindr Lane, arriving around 4:30 for the 5:00 o'clock start time. Clearly others were just as excited as the chapel and hallways were packed. We paid our \$30 each at the entry foyer manned by Thais, who I didn't recognize.

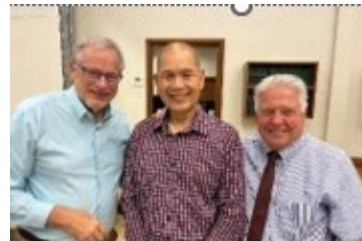
We entered the chapel and began looking for those we might recognize. There were maybe 200 in the chapel and the gym. I was disappointed that there were so few from the Morris era, 1973-1976. Ross and I were representing Thailand 12, the first group of missionaries called to the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Reed Haslam and Dennis Sorenson represented us at the Open House a month earlier.



Chapel Audience for the Dedication Reunion Event

We saw Sauan Sukhan, one of our Thai language instructors, at the Language Training Mission in Hawaii. He's been the Branch President of the Laotian Branch in SLC and has been called back to Thailand to help train the temple ordinance workers.

Ray and Janeen Brown were from Ayutthaya, where they'd been working for the last month, and are now headed home to SLC. Ray was an Assistant to the President when we first arrived in Thailand in 1973. Jeff Rock, who lives in Thailand, was there with his Thai wife. Dave and Mary



Ross Palfreyman, Sauan Sukan and J Montgomery

Phelps are old SEA veterans and are the parents of Mylai Christensen, the wife of Peter Christensen, our Bishop in Jersey City. Dave served in 1976. We saw them in Jersey City at Christmas in 2011.



With Martin Slater and James Jim DeGeering

Marty Slater and his wife were on the stand with the other former mission presidents who would speak this evening. And of course, Greg and Jen Low. That was it.

I introduced myself to Larry White, one of the six original missionaries who had come to Thailand from the Hong Kong mission in 1968. He has been very active through the temple open house, having been a mission president here and having served in the 1980s as a church legal representative for Asia. He was tired. We had an interesting discussion about how serving in the church is like being a piece of wood that eventually just gets burned out. He mentioned that he had written his Thai mission memoir. I asked him to send me the one he has. An interesting character.

Just before the program began, Wisan asked if I would give the opening prayer. I said yes, of course, and asked whether he wanted it in English or Thai. He said thank goodness. With a little more time, I could have done it in Thai, but I defaulted to English, which I'm sure disappointed the audience.

Following the opening prayer, Wisan showed an excellent video of the history of the mission. The Thailand 12 was well represented being missionaries' numbers 121-132. It was well done. Following the video, each of the former mission presidents and their wives spoke, Slater, Goodman, Hansen, and Dodge, except those who had spoken at the Open House last month, White, Eldridge, and Smith.

The talks and testimonies were great to hear, though they went a bit long. President Goodman and his wife went on for quite a while.



Dave Phelps

The closing prayer by Dave Phelps was notable. Dave is a larger-than-life sort of character. He wears outlandish-colored clothes and seems to have an opinion about everything, and he is involved everywhere. He has worked throughout Asia for most of his career and speaks excellent Thai with a flourish. Between he and Mary, who served a mission in Hong Kong, they are a very entertaining couple. His prayer was wonderful, energetic, and tied together the past, present, and future. In fact, it was so good that when Wisan put together the video summary of the reunion,

he traditionally didn't include the prayers, but he included Dave's, which was as good as the talks. No, the opening prayer was not included, about which I couldn't resist teasing Wisan.



Noi Wisanbanawit with Handkerchiefs

Noi Wisan had somehow found some more handkerchiefs and it was so nice of her to bring them to the reunion so we would have them at the dedication ceremony. These handkerchiefs have the Bangkok Temple and the dedication date sewn into them. A wonderful keepsake and reminder of the occasion.

Following the meeting, a Thai dinner of sorts was served along the back hallway. It was raining outside, so the serving stations were quite crowded. The food was fair at best, but it didn't matter, as we all just wanted to catch up with each other. I spent some time with Sauan and former President Smith, whom

Rhonda and I had met in Phuket in

2010. He enjoyed seeing the picture of us all with Brother Hatakiad, the Branch President in Phuket. He died in 2014.



Chapel after the meeting ended

After we had talked to all we could find, we headed back to the hotel, walking in the rain with the Lowes. It was a delightful walk in light rain. Bangkok at night is always magical. Back at the hotel, we went down to the food court

and had a good meal and smoothies.

Sunday, October 22 Temple Dedication Day

We slept in, with jetlag finally beginning to overwhelm our adrenaline. Ross had gotten a message from his cousin's daughter, Sidney Kearns, who lives in Bangkok with her husband. They were planning on attending the morning session of the dedication. Her husband works in IT for the State Department. We decided to head to the temple to see them and other friends who were attending the first session.



Temple Dedication Ticket

After another excellent breakfast, with more and more ending up on our plates, we took a cab to the temple, arriving around 11 in time to greet those leaving the first session as they left the temple doors. We wandered a bit around the temple courtyard, taking a few pictures of the Christus statue.



Photos from the Courtyard

As the participants in the first session came out of the south temple doors there was so much pure joy on the faces of all those participating in this unprecedented event. We first spotted Sauan Sukhan and his wife, and then Ray and Janene Brown, and so many others.



With Sister Sutita Chomphupuang

I was so happy to see and greet Sister Sutita Chomphupuang, an old friend from when I was a missionary in Thonburi, exiting the temple. We had been corresponding for the last few months and I wasn't sure she was going to be able to attend the dedication in the temple. She has had a difficult life but seems to have an optimistic spirit about her, saying:

“The dedication of the temple helped my testimony to know that our Heavenly Father truly loves us. I've learned so much more today than ever. Uplifting my spiritual knowledge about the Gospel”

We also ran into Anan Eldridge, a former Thailand Mission President, the first Thai male church member, and the first Thai Mission President. He had sent me a signed copy of his memoir via Jim Degering following the Open House last month. Ross said that he wanted one, too. Anon, with his usual smile and cheery disposition, said, “Sure, I'll be right back”.



With Anun Eldridge

We looked at each other, thinking he was going to an apartment block away, but instead walked over to the southeast corner of the temple, where there was a rather nondescript door. He got out his keys, opened them, and went inside. His wife, an American, must have seen our surprised looks and told us that there was an apartment where they had lived since returning to Thailand to help train the

temple ordinance workers. They have a home in Henderson, Nevada. She showed us pictures of the twobedroom, two-bath apartment. We were both surprised at how very nice it is. She said that they can have guests in, and they treat it as a normal place of residence. I understand that there are six units located in the temple structure and that is where the General Authorities stay when in town.



Anun Eldredge signing his book

Anan soon came out of the door with his book in hand, busy writing a personal note to Ross on the inside cover. We had a fun time talking with him about his future, which seemed openended but included several months in Bangkok working at the temple. Interestingly, Sauan has also been called back to Thailand to help train the temple workers.

We also ran into our friend Elder Khang and his sister, the Lowes, and Marty Slater.

Ross finally found his cousin's daughter, Sidney Kearns, and we agreed to meet for dinner on Monday evening.



The second Dedication Session was set to begin at 1:30. Our ticket was green, indicating that we would be seated in the annex third-floor chapel. Around 12:30 we were told that we should head there soon. We sat in the third row, on the left side of the chapel. A large screen has been lowered behind the podium on the stage. Larry White was in the pew directly across from us. Elder Khang texted that he was in the back of the chapel which quickly filled. His sister was attending the Asoke Chapel. We had a nice time chatting with those around us.

Around 1:15, Elder Rasband and his entourage entered the chapel through the door directly in front of us and began greeting the congregation, working his way down the aisle. We were glad to see him stop and warmly greet President White who we sensed was feeling a bit down through these dedication events.

Shortly after Elder Rasband left the chapel, the video broadcast from the temple celestial room began showing him entering the room and being seated with his wife and other temple leadership. As we waited for the program to begin, we saw Wisan approach Elder Rasband from the audience several times. The Celestial Room is not large and maybe 30-40 attended there. We found out later that Peter and Toni Willden, whose whereabouts were a mystery to us, had been in the cafeteria working hard the whole weekend, keeping the leadership fed, but had made it there and promptly started to doze!!

After Wisan had exchanged some words with Elder Rasband, a woman came from the audience to greet Elder Rasband. They spent a few minutes talking, and the sister returned to her seat. I learned later that the woman was Sister Srilaksana Suntarahut's youngest daughter, Thonggon, nicknamed Kluay (Banana).

We began the session singing The Spirit of God, after which Elder Rasband made some significant pre-dedicatory prayer comments. These comments were significant, but I have not been able to find a copy of them. He touched on the events leading to this day, with a special focus on Sister Sriluksana's role in translating the Book of Mormon and other scriptures and the sacrifices she had made in the process.

Sister Srilaksana's father was the King's Physician. When the queen was widowed, she asked her physician if she could raise some of his daughters in the palace. Sister Srilaksana was one of those who chose to live with the queen. She was with the queen when she was on her deathbed.

President Larry White was the elder who first found, taught, and baptized her in 1968. This story is well told in his memoirs, *Beginnings in Thailand—A Memoir 1967-68*, and in Reed Haslam's book, *Translating Scripture*.

I don't think I fully appreciated those sacrifices until these events. She died 10 years ago on November 9, 2013. My oldest daughter and I had the privilege of meeting with her at her home in 1997.

After those comments, Elder Rasband proceeded with the dedicatory prayer.

Messages from Elder Suchat Chaichana

The Bangkok Temple Open House was held the first two weeks of September and was a rousing success from a visitor perspective. Over 25,000 took the tour of the temple, and from a Thai and Expat member perspective, all working so hard and feeling an outpouring of the Spirit that only accompanies the opening of a new House of the Lord. Former missionaries Reed Haslam, author of *Translating Scripture* and *The Light Breaks on Southeast Asia*, and Dennis Sorenson, represented the Thailand 12. Other former missionaries from the Morris Era, 1973-1976, who were there included Ray Brown, Jeff Rock, and Jim Degering. On his return trip, Jim stopped by the house to tell me all about what an incredible experience it had been. I then had lunch with Reed who

described the same. After hearing these stories, I simply had to be at the dedication to capture just a sliver of it all.

I quickly booked my flight to Bangkok for October 18-24, the dedication being on the 22nd. I posted a message on the Thailand Missionary Alumni Facebook site saying I was coming. Shortly after I posted my message, I received a general message from the Church Area Authority Suchat Chaichana on the site. I knew Suchat 50 years ago when I taught in Thonburi, and we have reconnected from time to time over the years and especially with the advent of social media. He was asking who was coming to the dedication and explained that he was working with another old friend, Wisit Khanakham, now the President of this new temple, to try and arrange with the Salt Lake Temple Committee, who manage all temple openings through the dedication until it is handed over to the local leadership, an endowment session for any visiting former missionaries who served before 1980. He indicated that it was not a sure thing and would likely not happen as, traditionally, the first months of a new temple are spent training the new temple workers, which would certainly be the case in Bangkok.

Reading that message, I replied that I would change my flight to leave the evening of the 25th to allow for any possibility of participating, which I did. We packed our temple clothes just in case, but our expectations were low. Through the days before the dedication, we heard nothing and had pretty much given up hope that we would get to participate. After hearing nothing through the dedication day but enjoying all the activities tremendously, we began planning our last couple of days.

And then, just before we went to bed, we got a message from Elder Chaichana. Could we attend a 6 pm Endowment session on Wednesday evening? I replied that our flight was at 11:30 pm and it would be tight, but there was no way we would miss such an opportunity. We'd be there. Frankly, it was hard to sleep. Tuesday, October 23

The First Bangkok Temple Endowment Session

I had in fact slept very well, almost too well. I had begun taking NyQuil to battle the cold I thought I had gotten from Rhonda and was feeling dozy. There was a message from Suchat waiting for us, we would be participating in the temple's first endowment session at 6pm tonight instead of Wednesday night. We couldn't believe the kindness of these outstanding brethren.

Around 4:30 we began to get dressed for the temple. I was strangely nervous and excited. Thankfully we had brought our own temple clothes so would not have to deal with that. We had received a message from Suchat changing the session time from 6 to 7. Not quite sure why.

We caught a cab and sat for half an hour going about 100 yards. Typical Bangkok rush hour traffic just made me even more nervous. We hadn't gone past the metro station, so I paid the cab driver and we jumped out to catch the train which we did and were at the temple a few minutes later just after 6.

It was clearly the first session ever in this temple and the temple workers in training were looking excited but a bit dazed. We smiled and asked where the changing room was. A sister pointed us toward a door in the hallway and we proceeded to walk into the cafeteria. We came out and we all had a good laugh over that. We had met a couple in the temple waiting area, by the name of Tanner, a former missionary from the 80s and now a linguistics professor at BYU, scouting exchange program opportunities in Asia. He waved us down the hall indicating that he had found the dressing room.

The dressing room was small with maybe 10 dressing stalls. I was nervous. I opened my bag and at first couldn't find my socks which made me more nervous still. They were there.

There are two endowment rooms, one on each side of the Celestial Room, each with about 25 seats. These are pictures previously published.

There were six Thai brothers and ten or so sisters in training and five former missionaries, including us, President Goodman and his wife, and the Tanners. I sat between Brother Tanner and Ross. We had brought names that Steve Welling had given us since he could not attend since he had just had knee surgery.

George William Bateman
 23 May 1880 – January 1961 • GW04-81R

VIEW TREE VIEW RELATIONSHIP FOLLOW

ABOUT DETAILS SOURCES (12) COLLABORATE (0)

REQUEST	
Baptism B Completed	10 July 2009 Hamilton New Zealand Temple
Confirmation C Completed	21 August 2009 Curitiba Brazil Temple
Initiatory I Completed	12 April 2010 Provo Utah Temple
Endowment E Completed	24 October 2023 Bangkok Thailand Temple

Orman Keith Olson
 4 April 1905 – 14 June 1976 • UFQX-CQD

VIEW TREE VIEW RELATIONSHIP FOLLOW

ABOUT DETAILS SOURCES (6) COLLABORATE (0)

REQUEST	
Baptism B Completed	13 February 2019 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple
Confirmation C Completed	13 February 2019 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple
Initiatory I Completed	2 September 2021 Provo Utah Temple
Endowment E Completed	24 October 2023 Bangkok Thailand Temple

The endowment session was in Thai with English subtitles, which was delightful for me as I could read some Thai and see the translation. There was a Spirit there that one could only find in the Temple, and that feeling was particularly strong in the first session of this newly dedicated Temple. I had been feeling a bit feverish since walking around the pond at the Willdens. That fever broke at the end of the presentation, and I broke into a massive sweat that soaked my shirt. The Celestial room was fairly small, maybe 40' by 50', with seating for 15 or so.

We sat on the chairs in the corner and just thought about how far the Church in Thailand had come over the last 50 years and how blessed we were to have been there at the beginning and now here in this glorious place. The Spirit was strong as all the patrons entered the room.

The Goodmans sat on the sofa and the Tanners in the chairs around the table. We stayed 15-20 minutes and could have stayed longer but were sensitive to the time and those who had made this possible.

We left the Celestial Room into the hallway and into the arms of so many friends including Elder Suchat and Sister Aw Chaichana, Wisan and Noi Wisanbannawit and all those who had participated in the session as patrons and workers being trained. It was a moment never to be forgotten and never to be repeated.

As I changed into my street clothes, I couldn't find my phone which was a bit alarming especially in my drugged-out state. I went out to the reception foyer and asked Noi Wisan if she happened to see it. She hadn't but initiated a search with the other workers. Ross and I started roaming the building, taking a bit of a private temple tour, knowing that there was no way the phone had made it into the baptistry of sealing rooms. No one found it so we thanked everyone and headed to the train station for the ride back to the hotel. It was another quick ride and this time we actually exited the train station in the right direction directly into the hotel. We looked at each other in our room and couldn't help but wonder, did we do that? Were we really part of the first endowment session of the Bangkok Thailand Temple, where we served 50 years ago? We owe a debt of gratitude to those old friends who made it possible, Elder Suchat Chaichana, Elder Wisan Wisanbanawit, and President Wisit Khanakham. We fell into our beds, exhausted.

Epilogue

In some ways, the dedication of the Bangkok Thailand Temple and my visit to participate in it seem like a capstone to my 50-year relationship with Thailand. I love the country, its people, and its history. Since first living there as a missionary in 1973, I have visited seven times for business and adventure. Each time, I have been amazed at what a wonderful place it is. I have watched it evolve from a rustic third-world country to a modern place of business and tourism.

Through this evolution people have remained the same, kind, friendly, good humored, humble and a lot of fun. I have watched the Church grow from a single chapel to many, and now with a temple, two missions and over 25,000 members. A miracle before our very eyes.

I am not sure when or if I will return, but the relationships and memories I made there have made me and will stay with me forever.

Bangkok Temple Open House and Dedication Committee Experience

By Steve Stevens Executive Secretary, Open House and Dedication Committee

Around the beginning of February 2023, I received a very unexpected letter via email from Elder Kevin R. Duncan, General Authority Seventy and Executive Director of the Temple Department extending a call to serve as Executive Secretary for the Bangkok Thailand Temple Open House and Dedication Committee, something I would have never dreamed of or particularly wanted in a million years. I was called right after the co-chairpersons, President Chaimongkhon and Sister Petchara Surakhaka, so I had a front row seat to the entire process of planning and execution of the events.

Things started slowly, with the three of us and the Area Seventy, Elder Chaichana, first discussing candidates for and then submitting the names for the 11 subcommittee chairpersons/couples to be called. We had a series of meetings with our event planner from Church headquarters, Sister Joscie Barrow, both before and after the calling of the subcommittee leads, for which I provided interpretation and tried to keep notes.

Sister Barrow made an initial trip to Thailand the first week of March to kick off formal planning. On the first day of this trip, the four of us (chairpersons, executive secretary, and Area Seventy) were able to do our first walk through of the temple! The Spirit hit me right when I walked through the doors into the lobby. I was struck by the beauty of the House of the Lord evidenced in the artwork, materials, and quality. I felt a special affinity with this temple as I recognized elements of Thai culture/design in the patterns of the rugs, windows, woodwork, etc. Having arrived in Thailand as a missionary 37 years prior to this day and never even conceiving that there would ever really be a temple here, I was overwhelmed with gratitude to my Heavenly Father and the magnitude of the blessing of having a temple here truly was. The Holy Ghost confirmed to me that I was in a sacred place, even if it was not yet dedicated.

In a subsequent meeting during that trip, all the committee members were allowed to come to the Annex, their first time on the temple grounds, and were introduced to their responsibilities and provided with checklists for their respective subcommittees. After Joscie's departure, I served as the conduit for questions from the subcommittees through the chairpersons to the Temple Department and for the responses back. In April while home on annual leave, I was invited to a very small meeting at the Lao-Thai Ward in Salt Lake at which there were only six attendees, two of which were an Apostle, Elder Gerrit W. Gong, and his wife! Elder Gong had been assigned to conduct the Media Day and Invited Guest (VIP) portion of the Open House and sought counsel and feedback on the first draft of media remarks. That was a special and humbling experience to see such a senior leader of the Church, a wonderful and inspired man, being so diligent in doing homework months in advance and seeking input from "the least of these" like me.

A big hiccup occurred a few months into things in May when our chairpersons were called into the temple presidency and had to be replaced. “Changing horses in midstream” posed an extra challenge to planning continuity. Initially reluctant to come on board where things were so far along and they had not been part of the selection process for the team they were inheriting, Brother Boonchan and Sister Varaporn Tokhan ultimately did accept the call, step into their roles, and successfully lead the committee to culminate successful events.

Gradually, the plans grew more detailed as the months passed as the events drew nearer. Meetings and other communications occurred more frequently. Preparations became more concrete in the form of invitations, pass along cards, contracts, etc. Pressure increased as well, to the point that I cancelled work-related travel to Cambodia and Malaysia because I was too concerned about being out of pocket for weeks at a time on two occasions. I felt the need to be close and focused on helping in the final preparations.

During the last week of August, the big event finally arrived—Open House. This consisted of Media Day and Invited Guest tours that lasted for three days, followed by two weeks of Open House for the general public. Elder Gong tacked on a Young Single Adult devotional/temple tour and tri-stake devotional to the front end, so it was a very hectic time.

There were many problems and challenges, even behind the scenes drama, on a daily basis. I could fill up pages writing about these things. At the same time, there were some wonderful compensatory acts of sacrifice and service. One example of this is that from the beginning we had hoped to have a lot of members involved as volunteers during the open house. At the outset, we had envisioned this being a wonderful, perhaps even one in a lifetime opportunity to have leaders and members reach out to less active members and not only invite to attend the Open House but also to actually serve as volunteers, hoping that the feeling of being needed, coupled with the experience of visiting the temple would spark the desire to come back into the fold of activity. As a result, we had hoped that there would be enough volunteers that members would ideally only have to or be able to do one shift over the course of the Open House, so we actually initially declined offers to assist from returned missionaries and expatriate Thais from overseas and the full-time missionaries currently serving in Thailand (with the exception of the sister missionaries who were to run the video rooms). Well, with a few individual exceptions, the wholesale outreach to inactives never really happened. The aperture had to be opened for the active members who were willing to serve to be able to sign up for multiple shifts. Unfortunately, there ended up being so few of them that many ended up serving all shifts every day. Even with this Herculean effort by many, manpower was still inadequate due to a large number of no-shows. (I believe the Usher Subcommittee cited one day where 35 volunteers had signed up but only 8 actually reported for duty.) We quickly had to adapt and take all the RM support that was offered and could not have successfully operated the Open House

without the support of the senior missionaries and young elders. The Thailand Bangkok Mission was a life saver!

For the volunteers who did show up and serve in any capacity, whatever their status (member, missionary, RM) and whatever their role, their service is so appreciated. What a special opportunity to be involved in what will likely be for many of them a once in a lifetime event. For the core volunteers that were there day in and day out, they were so key to making things happen, keeping things moving, taking care of people. Their service was truly consecrated. I am so grateful to the Committee Members, the committed key volunteers, and even those who served a single shift. It took everyone's combined efforts to make the event successful.

Part of my responsibilities during the Open House was to serve as a tour guide of the temple. Initially this was during the "invited guest" (VIP) period, but it ended up extending all the way through the public portion of the Open House. As a result, I had the privilege of sharing the temple and an introduction to our beliefs about the temple with government officials and politicians, professors and educational leaders, descendants of royalty, and van drivers and waiters. I provided tours to Buddhist monks and Catholic priests. I was even able to accompany some of my own friends and family, as well as the friends and family of other members. This entire event was an unforgettable experience! To the greatest extent possible, I tried to adhere to the model provided by Elder Gong during the training he provided to the group of us who were to serve in this capacity and during the tours on which I accompanied him as an interpreter.

There is no doubt that everyone who visited the temple observed and appreciated the beauty of the architecture and construction. However, many were also able to recognize significance and beauty of the doctrines of departed dead who never had the chance during their lifetime being able to have access to the same blessings that we do now and of marriage and sealing as eternal families.

In the April 2023 General Conference, Elder Duncan shared an experience he had with a during a tour of the Tokyo Temple that captures this sentiment. "This man was not moved simply by the exquisite craftsmanship of the temple but rather by the stunning and profound doctrine that families are united and sealed to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ forever. We should not be surprised, then, when even someone not of our faith recognizes the majesty of what happens in the temple. What could become common or routine for us is sometimes seen in its splendor and majesty by those who hear it or feel it for the very first time."

I had several similar experiences of my own along these lines. In the baptistry, when I explained to one VIP that for members of the church our vicarious participation in ordinances like baptism was akin to the Thai Buddhist cultural concept of "ทำบุญ" or making merit, doing something on behalf of others with the hope that it will be chalked

up to their good, the individual was so impressed that she asked if she could bring a list of her ancestors and have baptisms performed for them! On more than one occasion, as I concluded tours by having the visitors stand in one of the sealing rooms and explain about the eternity mirrors, I spoke of how marriage by proper authority allows the couple married in the present to be a link in the chain connected to their ancestors of successive prior generations going one direction and their future posterity of generations going in the other direction and had visitors ask if they could or comment on how they wish they could be married like that when they got married.

On top of that, many were also able to recognize the peace and holiness of the House of the Lord, as by far the number one word used to describe the temple and their feelings about their experience there when I asked people about them was “peace.” In the end, it seems that we were largely successful in keeping the challenges and drama behind the scenes. On many occasions, I reminded the volunteers that we would accept the hecticness in managing personnel and dealing with issues on the outside, so that things would go smoothly on the inside of the temple. I am so grateful for the peace I find in the temple, whether sitting in the Celestial Room during a tour or participating in sacred ordinances now that it is operating.

As for the Dedication, while it was obviously much shorter in duration, only 1 day vice 3 weeks, it constituted a major event in and of itself, thus requiring a great deal of planning and preparation, so much so, that I again postponed planned travel to Cambodia to stick close to home to help make sure planning, rehearsals, etc. stayed on track. Once again, there were challenges in executing the event and drama with people involved, but once again there were some compensatory offsets, so that, overall, it was a success.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband was tasked with presiding over the two dedicatory sessions and offering the dedicatory prayer. Despite being extremely busy with my responsibilities, I ended up being told to be in the Celestial Room for both sessions. They were both incredible! The talks were all good. The music was angelic. The experience was almost Pentecostal. I experienced such powerful emotions of gratitude to Heavenly Father that the efforts of so many missionaries and faithfulness of so many members over decades had led to this day of His blessing Thailand with a temple. The Spirit of God was truly like a fire burning in my heart. There were times when I couldn't even get the words of the hymn out.

As amazing as some of the experiences during the open house and even the spiritual outpouring of the temple dedication were, for me, the first week of temple operations was even more incredible and memorable for me. It was so exciting to have the temple open for one of the primary purposes for which it was built—to perform sacred ordinances through restored priesthood authority to allow deceased persons the opportunity to accept or reject the same covenants that their living posterity who submitted their names have had in mortality. The other primary purpose of the temple— saving ordinances for the living to bind themselves to the Savior through those covenants—had to wait another week, because the first week, actually referred to as

Week 0, was reserved for temple ordinance workers to practice on one another. Once Week 1 of operations arrived, it was another incredible experience. While once again there were challenges with a chronic shortage of personnel and ordinance workers who had no experience in performing the ordinances, the Spirit of the Lord was present, confirming that this truly was His holy house and that the work that had begun to be performed was according to his divine plan for the salvation of His children.

Although I have lived near, visited, and attended many temples over the past almost four decades and even felt a special connection to different temples on some level (Manti, where I received my own endowment; Provo, where I attended weekly while at the MTC; Salt Lake, where I was sealed; Washington D.C., where I lived for several years; Mount Timpanogos, where I was an ordinance worker for years), the Bangkok Thailand Temple has become “my temple” in a truly unique way. Having watched it from announcement to rendering to groundbreaking, through construction, open house, and dedication, and now in start-up operations, with such a front row seat for these latter events, I feel an affinity with it like no other. I am so grateful to my Heavenly Father to have played a small role in this historic experience.

The Thailand Bangkok Temple Open House

By Mark Tippetts

My wife Sandy and I had been assigned to serve in the Udon district starting December 2021. It was an exciting time and a tough time. It was at the end of Covid lock downs, yet many members were not extremely comfortable returning to church. It was exciting because the new Temple in Bangkok was nearing completion.

Two things we decided to focus on were preparing members for the Temple and getting them excited to want to attend the open house.

As far as preparation and getting members to return to Sunday church attendance we tried to do activities. One was offering Taco Soup after a church meeting. Taco soup was a hit. The second thing we did was send a message that on Sunday they would get a beautiful picture of the new Temple. Not a rendering but an actual photo of the new Temple. This also was a hit, and our hearts were warmed as we visited their homes and many times the Temple photo was prominently displayed.

Covid was devastating on the Thai economy. Many members were still struggling financially. Especially the member in Vientiane Laos. We had a great concern about the cost to get so many members down to Bangkok.

We had several ideas that we discussed. Included was bake sales, car washes, and selling treats. In the end none of the ideas really felt good. The one that seemed like the best idea was having ties made with the image of the Temple woven in the cloth. Unfortunately, we could not locate the cloth.

One day while walking around the Terminal 21 Mall we came upon a shop selling necklaces. We noticed that they were custom made. We got their number and called. I asked can you craft tie tacks? The owner answered yes. I sent her several photos of the Temple and photo samples of other Temple necklaces for her to build the molds.

As the manufacturing process progressed then we also started the process of marketing the finished product. We relied upon many members to help with Facebook page and opening a bank account to collect the money from the sales. They created QR Codes and helped with the inventory.

As we started counting the number of members that wanted to go, we were told that we would need four buses just to send the members in our District. Each bus would cost 70,000 baht. The cost would also include food and water for the long trip.

In the end thanks to faithful Thai members, many RMs and additional donations we sold all we made. We collected enough funds to charter four buses and send funds to help the Saints in Chiang Mai. We also still had funds in the account which has been used to offset the cost of travel for members to go to the Temple for endowments, marriage sealings and baptism. I was informed that one year later they finally used all the funds collected from the jewelry sales.

Bangkok Temple Open House and Dedication

By Larry White

Preface

In August 2023, my wife and I as well as Michael and Janice Smith and Anan and Rozella Eldredge, all former Thailand Bangkok mission leaders, traveled to Thailand to voluntarily assist with the open house activities for the Bangkok Thailand Temple which took place from August 26 through September 16, 2023. We also attended the temple dedication which took place on October 22, 2023. This is my personal account of our involvement in these wonderful events.

August 26, 2023 – Saturday – Youth Activity and Temple Day

Saturday morning, August 26, we attended a meeting with the open house committee chaired by Varaporn and Boonchan Tokhan and assisted by Arun and Cherry Thongmee. We assisted in assembling open house packets and received instructions. We returned to our condo, changed clothes, and returned to assist with the large youth group of that was visiting the temple as its first guests.

We took a taxi to the temple complex because we did not want to get too sweaty. I studied the Thai talking points which were provided for temple tours. 378 Thai youth toured the temple. We acted as presenters for the baptistry in the temple as the youth filed through.

Before the youth came, we were guided through the temple to orient us. Janice and I took our duty station in the baptistry. Rozella and Anan Eldredge were assigned to a sealing room and Janis and Michael Smith were assigned to the celestial room. At first, as groups of about 20 youth came through at a time, I gave a two-minute explanation in Thai explaining baptism for our deceased ancestors and that we perform baptisms for the dead in the temple as Paul taught in Corinthians. I also explained because Christ taught that one must be baptized to enter the Kingdom of God, that baptism for the dead makes this ordinance available to those who have passed away without the opportunity to be baptized while living.

Some of the youth were visibly moved at being in the temple for the first time, some to the point of shedding tears. However, it became obvious that the explanation was taking too much time, and the decision was made to have only a silent tour, allowing the large group to move through expeditiously.

After the temple tour, there was a photo session with the youth and Elder Gong, who spent a long time in the blazing tropical sun allowing those in attendance to be photographed with him. I was full of admiration at his patience. We were able to have our picture taken as three former Thailand Bangkok mission leaders with Elder Garrett Gong and Elder Kelly Johnson.

Being able to assist the youth as they visited the temple was a very moving experience for me. It was a privilege and honor to be involved in this activity and spend time in the temple. It was also touching to see Elder Gong minister to the youth.



Open House Committee, including co-chairs Varaporn and Boonchan Tokhan, and stake President, Arun Thongmee and his wife Cherry Thongmee, Communications Chairperon.



Youth with Elder Gong in front of temple.



Youth after touring temple.

August 28, 2023 – Monday

Monday was media day with many reporters present. The Governor of Bangkok, Chadchart Sittipunt attended as well as the former governor who is a longtime friend of the church, Dr. Pichit Rattakun. The Governor spoke and commented that the temple makes a wonderful addition to the city of Bangkok. Dr. Rattakun spoke about the long history of the church in Thailand, noting that missionaries first came to Thailand in 1968. He also congratulated the church on the completion of the temple. The communications committee chairperson, Cherry Thongmee, sat with the other dignitaries on the stand.

Elder Garrett Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke welcoming the press and the dignitaries and commenting that the temple is a place where we perform ceremonies that make merit for our ancestors. Following these remarks, he escorted the past and present Governors of Bangkok and the media through the temple.

During the day, music was played on an instrument called a “teem” in the reception area. Sister Thongkorn Phanklom, the daughter of Sirlaksana Suntarahut, one of the first members of the church in Thailand in 1968, played the keyboard. Some people were still wearing masks due to the recent Covid epidemic.



Thongkorn Phanklom playing keyboard for open house

After the tour of the Governor and the press, other VIP tours began. I do not have a record of all tours, but on Monday, I escorted Shaun Stenning, president of 5 Star Marine and his group through the temple and explained its purpose. Mr. Stenning has partnered with the church in humanitarian projects.



Shaun Stenning next to wife in white dress.

August 29, 2023 – Tuesday

The photos below capture some of the day's activity. Elder Gong met with former Thai ambassador to the US and his wife Benchapa and escorted them through the temple.



I escorted a large group through the temple in Thai consisting of temple contractors and suppliers.



Sister Judy Ogden and I escorted retired General Tawatchai Boonsri on a tour of the temple. Former mission president Michael Smith became acquainted with General Boonsri during the flood of 2009 when the church and the Thai Army collaborated to provide humanitarian services. Former Thai mission president Michael Smith and his wife Janis assisted in presenting a



commemorative plate.

Following this, I escorted representatives from the Bangladesh, Germany and Timor-Leste embassies through the temple.



Later, a Chinese family named Liu who were members of the church visiting from the mainland came in off the street. Annie Wong who serves with the church public affairs department in Hong Kong and I took them through the temple sharing the duties and explaining the temple to them in Chinese. I did fine except I could not remember the new word for Celestial which has changed since I was a missionary in Taiwan in 1966-68.



I also was able to conduct a tour for members of the faculty of the Bangkok International School where our children went to school when we lived in Bangkok. Alan Hess, one of the first six missionaries to Thailand, arrived on the 28th and joined the tour with International School Bangkok (ISB) personnel.



Bangkok Internation School faculty visits the temple.

The last tour for the day for me was with a Japanese member from Tokyo who wanted to take his Thai employee on a temple tour.

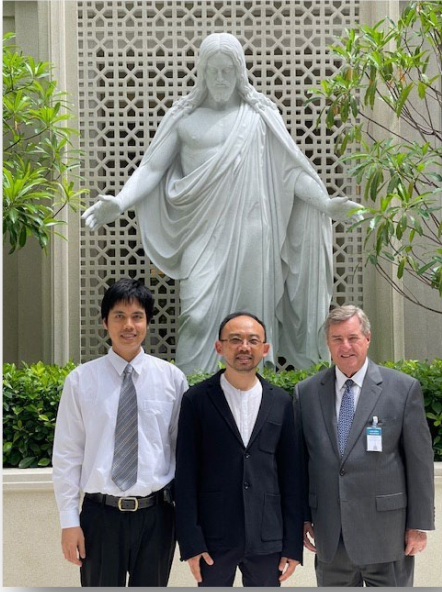
August 30, 2023 – Wednesday

We met Elder Garrett Gong in the temple annex foyer, and he was kind enough to allow us to take a photo with him.



L-R Alan Hess, Rozella Eldredge, Anan Eldredge, Elde Garrett Gong, Janice White, Larry White

I was pleased to be able to escort the President of the Thai Bible Society and his assistant through the temple.



Janice and I escorted Mary Jane and Bundit Unrungsi, a noted Thai conductor, on a tour of the temple together with his parents and a daughter.



Anan Eldredge, Michael Smith, Alan Hess, and I also filmed a little vignette for the Church News.



We also escorted Jerry James and his wife, Dale Jones with his wife, Joyce, Alan and Carol Hess, Kim Farah and others through the temple.



August 31, 2023 – Thursday

On Thursday I escorted an Italian who manages a hotel with his Thai staff.



I also escorted David Rockwood on the far right and a friend through the temple.



Former Thailand missionary Somphorn and his Muslim wife and children went with me through the temple. Brother Somphorn was particularly moved in the celestial room where he wept with considerable emotion for quite some time.



The evening of August 31, we held a reunion with our missionaries who served between 1991 and 1994. It was a wonderful event.

September 1, 2023 – Friday

Friday was the first day of temple tours for the public. We met a large group of our former Thai missionaries and went through the temple together. Like all the tours, we started at the

recommend desk and explained the need for a recommend, although most if not all of them had been through the temple at least once, some of them almost 30 years ago, in the Manila, Philippines Temple.

We then took them to the waiting area across from the recommend desk which is a beautiful room. Then, we took them to the baptistry where it was explained that everyone in the temple dresses in white, signifying purity and equality in the site of God for all people. They also saw the baptismal font placed on 12 oxen signifying the 12 tribes of Israel. Following this, we went upstairs to the dressing room, the instruction room, the celestial room, and finally to the sealing room, explaining the purpose of each room.

This was a significant experience for our former missionaries. Several were very moved by the experience and were weeping as we left the temple. A few of them who had not been coming to church vowed to return and visited the distribution center in the temple annex to purchase temple garments. We took a group photo after the tour.



Former missionaries whom we escorted on a temple tour the first day of public open house.

That same day, we were also given a tour of the temple annex by Blair and Lisa Walker, former construction managers of the temple. Jerry James and his wife Georgia who were instrumental in finding the property on which the temple is located were with us as were Alan and Carol Hess.



L-R Blair Walker, Lisa Walker, Janice White, Larry White, Alan Hess, Carol Hess, Georgia James, Jerry James.

Later that evening we had a missionary reunion that involved all former Thailand missionaries. At that time many bore testimonies and three former mission presidents, and their wives spoke, Rozella and Anan Eldredge, Janice and Larry White and Janis and Michael Smith. We also took a group photo of missionaries from our mission era. See below.



September 2, 2023 – Saturday

The only tour we had this day was with a Thai friend from Salt Lake City, Kwan Wong. She is a member of the church, although not currently attending services. Unfortunately, she passed away in Bangkok in July 2024.



Kwan Wong and friends following the temple tour.

September 5, 2023 – Tuesday

Tuesday was a long day. We arrived at the temple annex at 8:30 a.m. We served as silent ushers in the celestial room. After lunch at the FX Hotel next door, we returned and welcomed people at the recommend desk and entry area inside the temple.

This day, we received the very distressing news that Cherry Thongmee, one of the open house chairpersons suffered a stroke.

September 6, 2023 – Wednesday

Wednesday was an interesting day. First, I helped with door opening as the guests came to the temple.

I also helped a member login to familysearch.org.

Sarawut Kanyaphan, one of our former assistants when he was a missionary, introduced us to a friend of his who is a Thai Baptist pastor. Usually, the Baptists are not too friendly to us. However, this friend made the point that just because we disagree about points of doctrine does not mean we cannot be friends. This was a refreshing interaction.

A Ukrainian girl and another girl from Australia came in together and wanted to do a fashion shoot around the temple. They said the temple was very beautiful, that it looked European, and would be a wonderful backdrop for their fashion show. Of course, I had no authority to authorize anything, and I passed them on to someone else. I suppose because I was wearing a suit they thought I had some authority.

Sister Corbett, a Thai sister, was working at the open house. She learned that I was the mission president who opened the Thai town of Kalasin and thanked me for opening it because this enabled her to find the church. She actually became emotional and asked to have her picture taken with me. I was relieved to receive this news because I worried that perhaps I had made a mistake in opening such a small place far from a center of strength in Bangkok.

A missionary sister needed a blessing. Elder David Watts, a full time missionary and retired physician who was staffing the first aid station for the open house were able to provide that service.

President Burgener and his wife came to see us and gave us white handkerchiefs for the Hosanna Shout to use when the temple is dedicated which was very thoughtful of them. We had a photo taken with them after which with the three former mission leaders were serving.



L-R Anan Eldrdge, Rozella Eldredge, Larry White, Janice White. Janis Smith, Michael Smith, Sister Burgener, President Burgener.

September 7, 2023 – Thursday

Janice served as an usher inside the temple for four hours on Thursday. I worked outside the temple and greeted people due to the problem I experienced standing for extended periods. There were very few tours at this juncture, so people stood as silent greeters inside the temple or welcome them at the temple annex.

I include photo of a sister named Mot who the door opener for all the people who left the assembly area to go to the temple. She was from Udorn and did a wonderful job of manning the door.



Sister Mot

who manned to door so well.

It is interesting that the local members were given permission by the temple department to impose a rather Buddhist custom and provide a wrap for females who were wearing shorts or whose skirts were deemed too short. A shawl was also provided to cover bare shoulders. This is the same practice followed by Buddhist temples. I think this was a good thing and made the point that the temple was a special, sacred place.

One Thai woman came all the way from New Zealand at her own expense as a volunteer to help with the open house. None of the volunteers who were helping as ushers or greeters or in any other capacity were paid. Some volunteers had to use their annual leave in order to serve. There was a deaf woman serving, and I also saw an older sister on a cane acting as an usher. Some came from long distances in Thailand to help. It is a tribute to their faithfulness and devotion.

September 8, 2023 – Friday

On Friday I did some FamilySearch work for a member. Sasitorn Vantanchan one of the first members in Thailand in 1968 came to tour the temple. After the temple dedication she became a temple worker and used her excellent English ability to work in the temple office two days a week.



L-R Janice White, Sasitorn Vatanachan, and Larry White.

September 9, 2023 – Saturday

September 9 was a big day with many groups from Thai wards and branches visiting the temple. They lined up four abreast in groups of 20. Few tours were conducted because due to the large number of visitors people had to move through the temple quickly.



Mary Phelps and I took the three Taiwan Buddhist nuns through the temple on a Mandarin language. It went very well. Mary who also spoke Chinese was a great help. The three Buddhist nuns were very delightful and friendly.



September 11, 2023 – Monday

Our two sons arrived from the US, and we spent Monday with them. Our daughters arrived on Wednesday, September 13.

September 12, 2023 – Tuesday

Today was the last day we worked in the temple due to the arrival of our six children. We worked Tuesday morning. Kwan Wong came again with a friend, and we escorted her through the temple. She felt that the celestial room was very peaceful and asked for a blessing.



Kwan Wong with friend with Larry & Janice White

Sister Wong was temporarily living in Thailand undergoing cancer treatment. Her home was in Salt Lake City where she owned a restaurant called the China Platter located in Bountiful. She remained in Thailand until July of 2024 when she succumbed to her illness. Her body was returned to the US for burial. Although she had been baptized in the US many years ago, she had

never been to the temple and expressed a desire before her death to received temple ordinances. Her family has given permission for that to take place.

September 13, 2023 – Wednesday

By September 13 all of our six children had arrived, and we spent a few days with them visiting places where they lived when we were on our mission from 1991-94. We also escorted them through the temple. The temple open house concluded on September 16, 2023. We did not work the last 3 days.



L-R Ellen Linford, Sarah Udall, Brandon White, Janice White, Larry White, Neil White, Erika Stowell, Alisha Bastian.

October 19, 2023 – Thursday

In preparation for the temple dedication, on the evening of October 18, we had dinner with the temple president and his wife Wisit and Sumaman Khanakham, President Burgener and his wife, Elder Suchat Chaichana and his wife as well as other former mission presidents, Thai leaders, and other members of the temple presidency and their wives at the FX Hotel next to the temple.



October 21, 2023 – Saturday

The 21st was the day of the second general missionary reunion in connection with the temple dedication. The first general reunion was prior to the open house in August.

On this day I went to the annex and received tickets for the second dedication session since we had already received tickets for the first dedicatory session. We were blessed to be invited to attend the first session in the celestial room.

At 3:00 p.m. on October 21 we went to the temple for some photos with some of our returned missionaries. While we were there Elder Ronald Rasband unexpectedly appeared. Someone mentioned I was one of the first missionaries. He shook my hand, and we briefly discussed the fact that I was involved in those very first days of missionary work in Thailand in 1968.



Meeting Elder Ronald Rasband.

We attended the missionary reunion at the Asoke Chapel where 5 former presidents and their wives spoke, former presidents Goodman, Dodge, Slater, Senior, and Hammond. We also took more photos with 20 of our missionaries who attended the reunion.



We also met with Thongkorn Panklom whose mother, Srilaksana Suntrahut, whom my companion and I taught and baptized and who was so important in establishing the church in Thailand.



With Thongkorn Phanklom

It was pouring rain after the meeting, and we got a taxi home with the former President Smith and his wife Janis.

October 22, 2023 – Sunday

October 22 was the long-awaited day appointed for the dedication of the temple. We attended the second temple dedication session via video link, but we attended the first session in the celestial room of the temple. We sat next to our former missionary who was my assistant, Sarawut Kanyaphan and his wife Sasitorn. Less than a year later they began presiding over the Thailand Bangkok East Mission.

Elder Ronald Rasband before dedicating the temple spoke about how many presidents of the church and apostles had visited Thailand stating that Thailand had been cradled in the arms of the prophets.

Following the dedicatory prayer, a copy of which appears at the end of this account in the Appendix, the Hosannah Shout took place with the instructions for the shout given in Thai by Elder Kevin Duncan. I was impressed that he memorized the instructions in Thai- even though it was difficult to understand him.

Then, the hymn “The Spirit of God” was sung as is traditional. Singing this hymn in English and Thai brought me to tears.

Following the morning session of the dedication we saw many friends and took photos with them. We also saw Jerry James and his wife Georgia whom I neglected to get a photo with. He was instrumental in finding the temple property.

As previously mentioned we attended the afternoon session in the temple annex via video link. I was gratified in that session to see that Elder Rasband invited Thongkorn Phanklom before the session to come up and talk with him privately. She later told me that he thanked her for the work done by her mother, Srilaksana Suntharahut. He also recognized Sister Srilaksana in his talk before the dedicatory prayer noting that some called her the mother of the church in Thailand and acknowledged her remarkable contributions to the church as the principal translator of the Book of Mormon in Thai as well as the Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrine and Covenants. I feel

certain that my Thai mother, my dear Sri, was there to hear this praise and receive some small public acknowledgement for all she sacrificed to help plant the church in Thailand.

Before the second session began, Elder Rasband came into the chapel in the annex where we were sitting and thanked those in attendance for coming. He walked by where I was sitting and thanked me and shook my hand and gave me a hug. I was surprised and very touched.

Following the second dedication session, we went with some of our former American missionaries, Chad Olsen, Troy McFadden, and David King to the FX Hotel next door and had dinner. It was so good to see them. McFadden and King were both my assistants when we they were missionaries. After dinner we returned to our little condo on Rama 9 Road.

See copies of the tickets to the sessions and the song sheet attached in the Appendix.

What a privilege and blessing it was to attend this temple dedication with my wife Janice. As one of the first missionaries who witnessed the church grow from the first meeting of only thirteen people in a house church in 1968 to the dedication of the beautiful Bangkok Thailand Temple 55 years later, I can only say that I feel highly blessed to have worked as a member of the open house committee and conducted tours in English, Thai, and Chinese, and most importantly to have attended the dedication of the beautiful Bangkok Thailand Temple. This was an emotional experience. I wish that my fellow missionaries from those early days had all been there.

October 25, 2023 – Wednesday

On Wednesday, October 25, we were fortunate to be able to attend an endowment session on only the second day temple sessions were being held. There were 17 women and 8 men on the session. One of them was our former missionary, Sister Soypaythai. That week, temple sessions were only scheduled for temple workers. However, temple president, Wisit Khanakham, knowing that we were returning home before the temple opened for general sessions kindly made an exception for us and for Michael and Janis Smith. It was a wonderful experience. The session was in Thai with English subtitles. Our friends, Boonchan Tokhan and Steve Stevens, were both working in the temple that day.

Sister Soiphaythai is a temple worker as are other former missionaries who served during our tenure as mission leaders. Sasistorn Vantanachan, whom my companion and I baptized in 1968, is also a temple worker.

What a blessing it was to be able to participate in the very first meeting of the church in the Thai language as a young elder so many years ago in 1968, to then return as a mission president, followed by attending the Bangkok Temple ground breaking in 2019, then being involved in the open house, attending the dedication, and finally, being able to attend one of the first temple endowment sessions. I will forever be grateful for these marvelous experiences.

The Bangkok Temple shines like a jewel in the city, a welcoming beacon.



4/6/24

Temple Dedication Tickets

การอุทิศ
 พระวิหาร
 กรุงเทพมหานคร
 ประเทศไทย
Harry White
 ชื่อผู้ถือใบรับรอง
 Harry White
 ลายเซ็นผู้นำฐานะปุโรหิต
 1 | วันอาทิตย์
 22 ตุลาคม 2023
 10:00 น.
 ห้องซันเลสเซี่ยล

การอุทิศ
 พระวิหาร
 กรุงเทพมหานคร
 ประเทศไทย
Janice White
 ชื่อผู้ถือใบรับรอง
 Janice White
 ลายเซ็นผู้นำฐานะปุโรหิต
 1 | วันอาทิตย์
 22 ตุลาคม 2023
 10:00 น.
 ห้องซันเลสเซี่ยล

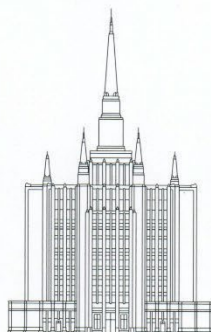
การอุทิศ
 พระวิหาร
 กรุงเทพมหานคร ประเทศไทย
Larry White
 ชื่อผู้ถือใบรับรอง
 Larry White
 ลายเซ็นผู้นำฐานะปุโรหิต
 2 | วันอาทิตย์
 22 ตุลาคม ค.ศ. 2023
 13:30 น.
 อาคารอเนกประสงค์
 ซ่างพระวิหาร

การอุทิศ
 พระวิหาร
 กรุงเทพมหานคร ประเทศไทย
Janice White
 ชื่อผู้ถือใบรับรอง
 Janice White
 ลายเซ็นผู้นำฐานะปุโรหิต
 2 | วันอาทิตย์
 22 ตุลาคม ค.ศ. 2023
 13:30 น.
 อาคารอเนกประสงค์
 ซ่างพระวิหาร

Temple Dedication Song Sheet – Thai Language

พระวิหาร กรุงเทพ ประเทศไทย

พิธีอุทิศ: 22 ตุลาคม 2023



พระวิญญานพระเจ้า

(ที่ประชุมร่วมร้องกับคณะนักร้องตามที่ผู้นำเพลงให้สัตยาณ)

พระวิญญานพระเจ้าเหมือนดั่งไฟกำลังลุกไหม้!
ริศมีแห่งยุคสุดท้ายเริ่มฉายออกมา
ภาพปรากฏและพรครึ่งโบราณหวนกลับมาใหม่
บรรดาเทพสวรรค์ลงมาเยี่ยมเยือนโลกา

เราจะร่วมร้องเพลง จะให้ร้องกับทัพสวรรค์
โยชนนา แต่พระผู้เป็นเจ้าของเจ้าและลูกแกะ!
พระสิริมีแต่พระองค์ในที่สูงที่สุด
ต่อนี้ไปและชั่ววันรันดร์ อาเมนและอาเมน!

พระองค์ทรงขยายความเข้าใจของวิสุทธิชน
ฟื้นฟูผู้วิจรรย์และอื่นๆ เช่นก่อน
ความรู้และพลังของพระผู้เป็นเจ้าของเจ้าแผ่ไป
มานปกคลุมพิภพเริ่มคลี่คลายขยายจร (คอรัส)

(เพลงสวด, บทเพลงที่ 2)

ท่านสามารถเก็บใบนี้ไว้ได้

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thailand A Second Mission for Thailand

Before the Thailand Bangkok Mission

When missionaries first came to Thailand, they came from the Southern Far East Mission based in Hong Kong. Among the first six, five were from Taiwan and one from Hong Kong. In November 1969, the Southeast Asia Mission was created with headquarters in Singapore, and Thailand became a zone of that mission.

Mission Presidents with Responsibility for Thailand

President	Period	Mission
Keith E. Garner	February 1968 - June 1968	Southern Far East (Hong Kong)
W. Brent Hardy	July 1968 - November 1969	Southern Far East (Hong Kong)
G. Carlos Smith	November 1969 - June 1972	Southeast Asia (Singapore)
Miller F. Shurtleff	July 1972 - August 1973	Southeast Asia (Singapore)

One hundred and twenty-three missionaries had served or were still serving in Thailand at the time of the creation of the Bangkok Thailand mission.

Creation of the Thailand Bangkok Mission

The church created the Thailand Bangkok Mission on August 1, 1973. My group of twelve missionaries (aka the Thailand-12) was the second-largest group of missionaries to arrive in Thailand together up to that time.¹ When we arrived at the Mission Home in Salt Lake City on June 9, 1973, we found that our airline ticket destination was Bangkok, not Singapore. We had all received calls to the Southeast Asia (Thailand) mission. A member of my ward, Henry Smith, was the editor of the Church News at that time. He told me before I departed that the church would soon create a new mission in Thailand.

After basic training in Salt Lake City, we traveled to the Asia Pacific Language Training Mission (LTM) in Laie, Hawaii. A temple must accompany missionary training centers, and the Hawaii Temple is adjacent to the campus of The Church College of Hawaii, today known as BYU-Hawaii.

The new mission was not created in time for President Paul and Sister Betty Morris to attend the regular new mission president training in June 1973. It was a rush job because of the difficulties the church experienced in Thailand in 1972. The Morris family had been living in Thailand before their call to serve as the new mission's president and mother.

In late July, the Morris family traveled to Salt Lake City for training and to be set apart for their new calling. My mother was able to meet them at a small event before they

¹ The largest group were fourteen Elders who arrived in January 1970, boosting the total missionaries to around 35.

returned to Thailand. On their way to Thailand, they stopped in Hawaii and traveled to the Asia Pacific Language Training Mission to meet with the twelve new missionaries learning the Thai language.

When we arrived at Don Muang Airport in Bangkok just before midnight on August 10, 1973, surprisingly, we found the Hong Kong Elders waiting to clear customs. Their plane was sent to Bangkok because there was too much turbulence near the Hong Kong airport. Soon, they were through customs and on their way to a nearby hotel. We had experienced moderate turbulence near Hong Kong during our stop there.

We followed the Hong Kong Elders through customs and then determined there was no one to meet us! The new mission had not received notification about our arrival. Thankfully, we had a native Thai in our group, Sunan Chantawichian, who tried to find a phone number for the church. The phone books did not help, but calling information did. We awoke the assistants to President Morris. They scrambled the mission van and were on the way to meet us. We were taken to a hotel near the Asoke meetinghouse using the van and a few taxis. Our bedtime that night was 2:00 am Bangkok time.

Starting a new mission where there where one had not existed previously is challenging. The Morris family already had a home in Bangkok but no mission office. Soon, we learned that Elders led every branch in Thailand, including the Bangkok branch.

We now move forward fifty years to the creation of Thailand's second mission. On November 1, 2023, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced that the Thailand Bangkok Mission would be split into two missions: the Thailand Bangkok East Mission and the Thailand Bangkok West Mission.

The split turned out to be easy to describe. The East mission would include the Bangkok Thailand Stake and the Ubon Ratchathani stake. Additionally, the mission would consist of the Ubon Thailand District and Laos. The West mission would include the Thailand Bangkok Thailand West stake and the Bangkok Thailand North stake. It also includes the Chaing Mai District and southern Thailand (Phuket). This mission would also be responsible for Myanmar. Myanmar has members, but they now allow little in the way of foreign visitors. President Burgener could not travel there because of military rule, but many preceding presidents were able to visit.

One remarkable aspect of the multipurpose building's design is that it includes two mission offices and mission homes. This situation leads to a minor issue. Generally, missionaries are not allowed to leave their mission boundaries. The multipurpose building is in the Bangkok West stake. Thus, the missionaries assigned to the East mission will be granted the opportunity to visit the temple and the mission office, even though, strictly speaking, it is outside their mission boundary.

Presidents of the Bangkok Thailand Mission

President	Period
Paul D. Morris	August 1, 1973 - June 30, 1976
Harvey Brown	July 1, 1976 - June 30, 1979
Clyde Lowe	July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1982
Floyd Hogan	July 1, 1982 - June 30, 1985
Floyd B. Weed	July 1, 1985 - June 30, 1988
Anun Eldredge	July 1, 1988 - June 30, 1991
Larry R. White	July 1, 1991 - June 30, 1994
Troy L. Corriveau	July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1997
Michael A. Goodman	July 1, 1997 - June 30, 2000
Martin R. Slater	July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2003
Scott F. Hansen	July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2006
Karl L. Dodge	July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2009
Michael S. Smith	July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2012
David M. Senior	July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2015
Kelly R. Johnson	July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2018
Todd M. Hammond	July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2021
Kelly T. Burgener	July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2024

Presidents and Mission Mothers of the Thailand Bangkok Mission



President and Sister Morris



President and Sister Brown



President and Sister Lowe



President and Sister Hogan



President and Sister Weed



President and Sister Eldredge



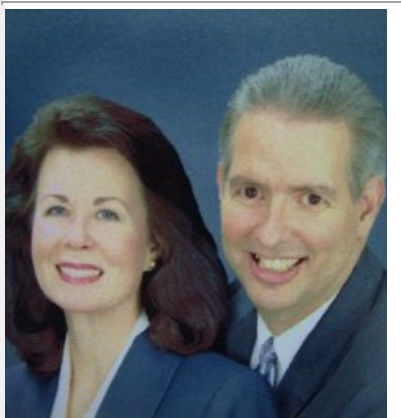
President and Sister White



President and Sister Corriveau



President and Sister Goodman



President and Sister Slater



President and Sister Hansen



President and Sister Dodge



President and Sister Smith



President and Sister Senior



President and Sister Johnson



President and Sister Hammond



President and Sister Burgener

Presidents and Mission Mothers of the Thailand Bangkok East Mission

President	Period
Sarawut Kanyaphan	July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027



President and Sister Kanyaphan

From the Church News January 19, 2024

Sarawut Kanyaphan, 55, and Sasithorn Kanyaphan, four children, Bangkapi Ward, Bangkok Thailand Stake: Thailand Bangkok East Mission. Brother Kanyaphan is a mission presidency counselor and former bishop, seminary teacher, stake president, and missionary in the Thailand Bangkok Mission. He was born in Bangkok, Thailand, to Boonlerd Kanyaphan and Sunantha Saeloh.

Sister Sasithorn Kanyaphan is a ward Relief Society president and former stake Primary president, district Relief Society president, institute teacher and temple ordinance worker. She was born in Chiangmai, Thailand, to Somchai Charoensirawat and Saengwaree Chainam.

President Sarawut is the second native Thai to serve as mission president in Thailand. He previously served as president of the Bangkok Thailand stake.

President and Sister Kanyaphan shared their feelings:

We are grateful that the gospel of Jesus Christ in Thailand has grown and progressed to two missions and are grateful for the service of all past missionaries. We are amazed that this calling has come to us. We also know that the gathering of Israel is the greatest work on earth today.

Presidents and Mission Mothers of the Bangkok Thailand West Mission

President	Period
Jeffrey G. Rich	July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027



President and Sister Rich

From the Church News – February 23, 2024

Jeffrey G. Rich, 55, and Christine Rich, six children, Orchard Hills Ward, American Fork Utah West Stake: Thailand Bangkok West Mission, succeeding President Kelly T. Burgener and Sister Elizabeth W. Burgener. Brother Rich is a Sunday School teacher and institute teacher and former stake president, bishop, elders quorum president, ward Young Men president and missionary in the Thailand Bangkok Mission. He was born in Logan, Utah, to Larry Grant Rich and Dorothy Nye Rich.

Sister Rich is a Sunday School teacher and institute teacher and former ward Young Women president, ward Primary president and Relief Society teacher. She was born in Missoula, Montana, to Jerry Thomas Waddoups and Carolyn Gibb Waddoups.

President and Sister Rich share their feelings:

Sister Rich and I were completely surprised and humbled when called to be mission leaders in the fall of 2023. “What a tremendous and exciting responsibility,” we thought, “to continue helping to lead the momentum of growth in the church like so many others had done before.” We then quickly felt overwhelmed by the many logistics and items of preparation that would be required to prepare for such an adventure. At one particularly busy part of our preparation, when the adversary was working to dissuade and discourage us, I remember thinking, “how can I allow such feelings to enter my thoughts, when there has been such sacrifice by so many early Thai pioneers and others

who have dedicated their lives to the growth of the church in Thailand and set such a wonderful example of perseverance and faithfulness. The least I can do is take another short season of my mortality to serve among the people that I love.

For Sister Rich, the idea of serving in a faraway land to which she had never traveled and a culture she had never experienced, was also quite intimidating. Typical of her response to any challenge, she began an intense study of the language, culture, and history of Thailand. Her excitement grew as she began to realize what a unique and special people and land she would soon be interacting with.

We both experienced many miracles as friends, family, and even complete strangers began contacting us with both words of encouragement and connections to Thailand about which we would have otherwise not known. We relished the opportunity to hear of their experiences and feel of their genuine love for a land, people, and sacred work that continues to thrive. One particular example was the reacquaintance that occurred with my mission president, Anan Eldredge. As a young missionary in 1988, President Eldredge moved his young family to Thailand to be my mission president. I grew to love and appreciate him for his example and dedication to his native people even though he had lived in the US for many years. Now, many years later and during our preparation to serve, I had the opportunity to meet with he and his wife during one of their breaks back home from serving in the new Thailand, Bangkok temple. His commitment to the people of Thailand continues in yet another capacity and helped encourage me to prepare for and execute on my new responsibilities.

Church Units in Thailand as of February 20, 2024

THAILAND BANGKOK WEST MISSION

Thailand Bangkok North Stake

- Bangkhen Ward บางเขน วอร์ด
- Chaengwattana 1st Ward (English)
- Chaengwattana 2nd Ward
- Lophburi Ward ลพบุรี วอร์ด
- Rangsit Ward รังสิต วอร์ด
- Ayutthaya Branch อโยธยา สาขา

Thailand Bangkok West Stake

- Asoke Ward อโศก วอร์ด
- Bangbuathong Ward บางบัวทอง วอร์ด
- Bangkhae Ward บางแค วอร์ด
- Bangkok Ward (English) English วอร์ด
- Thonburi Ward ธนบุรี วอร์ด

Thailand Chiang Mai District

- Chiang Mai 1st Branch สาขา เชียงใหม่1
- Chiang Mai 2nd Branch สาขา เชียงใหม่2
- Chiang Mai 3rd Branch สาขา เชียงใหม่3
- Chiang Rai Branch สาขา เชียงราย
- Kamphaeng Phet Branch สาขา กำแพงเพชร
- Lampang Branch สาขา ลำปาง
- Phitsanulok Branch สาขา พิษณุโลก

THAILAND BANGKOK EAST MISSION

Thailand Bangkok Stake

- Bangkapi Ward บางกะปิ วอร์ด
- Bangnaa Ward บางนา วอร์ด
- Ramkhamhaeng Ward
- Samutprakarn Ward สมุทรปราการ วอร์ด
- Srinakharin Ward ศรีนครินทร์ วอร์ด
- Chonburi Branch สาขาชลบุรี

Thailand Ubon Stake

- Buriram Ward บุรีรัมย์ วอร์ด
- Korat Ward โคโรราช วอร์ด
- Mahasarakham Ward
- Roi-Et Ward ร้อยเอ็ด วอร์ด
- Srisaket Ward ศรีสะเกษ วอร์ด
- Ubon Ward อุบลฯ วอร์ด
- Kalasin Branch กาฬสินธุ์ สาขา
- Surin Branch สุรินทร์ สาขา
- Yasothorn Branch ยโสธร สาขา

Udon Thailand District

- Khon Kaen Branch ขอนแก่น สาขา
- Kumpawapi Branch กุมภวาปี สาขา
- Nong Khai Branch หนองคาย สาขา
- Sakhon Nakorn Branch สกลนคร สาขา
- Udon 1st Branch อุคร1 สาขา
- Udon 2nd Branch อุคร2 สาขา

Bangkok, Thailand, Home to the Tenth Missionary Training Center

Church to open a new missionary training center in Bangkok, Thailand — it's 10th worldwide.

Effective January 2024, the Thailand MTC will be housed in the multipurpose building adjacent to the Bangkok Thailand Temple, which was dedicated in October 2023

The Church News - 13 Dec 2023, 9:06 AM MST



Photo 1: The Bangkok Thailand Temple and the multipurpose building, right foreground. The new Thailand Missionary Training Center will open in the multipurpose building in January 2024.

By Scott Taylor

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will open a new missionary training center — its 10th worldwide — next month in Bangkok, Thailand.

Effective January 2024, the Thailand MTC will be located in the multipurpose building adjacent to the new six-story Bangkok Thailand Temple, which was dedicated and began operation in October.



Photo 2: The reflection pool and Christus statue in the courtyard located between the Bangkok Thailand Temple (not pictured) and its adjacent multipurpose building (in the background).

Located to the north side of the six-story house of the Lord and separated by a small courtyard, the multipurpose building houses administrative and other Church offices, two chapels, meeting rooms and a FamilySearch center.

The Thailand MTC will help accommodate the training of new full-time missionaries who are from Southeast Asia and other regions.

The new missionary training center was announced Wednesday, Dec. 13, on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

The Church's 10 MTCs provide training to new missionaries, most of whom participate in online training at home for the first week of their mission. Missionaries are then assigned to a missionary training center to complete their training, which can run from two weeks to as long as eight weeks if learning a language other than their native tongue.

Currently Operating Missionary Training Centers

Provo Missionary Training Center

Location: Provo, Utah

Areas served: Missions worldwide

Training languages: More than 50 different languages

Brazil Missionary Training Center

Location: São Paulo, Brazil

Areas served: Missions in Brazil, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Angola, South America, Central America, Mexico, Japan, Portugal

Training languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese

England Missionary Training Center

Location: Preston, England

Areas served: Missions in Europe

Training languages: English, English as a second language, French, German, Greek

Ghana Missionary Training Center

Location: Accra, Ghana

Areas served: Missions in West Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar

Training languages: Amharic, English, English as a second language, French, Swahili

Mexico Missionary Training Center

Location: Mexico City, Mexico

Areas served: Missions in Mexico; other countries of North, Central and South America; Dominican Republic; Haiti

Training languages: Spanish, Haitian Creole, K'ekchi

New Zealand Missionary Training Center

Location: Auckland, New Zealand

Areas served: Missions in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga

Training languages: English, English as a second language, French (native speakers only), Samoan (native speakers only), Tongan

Peru Missionary Training Center

Location: Lima, Peru

Areas served: Central and South America

Training language: Spanish

Philippines Missionary Training Center

Location: Manila, Philippines

Areas served: Missions in the Philippines and Asia

Training languages: Cambodian, Cebuano, English, English as a second language, Hiligaynon, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Mongolian, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese — all languages except Tagalog and English as a second language are for native speakers only

South Africa Missionary Training Center

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

Areas served: Missions in Southeast Africa, Madagascar

Training languages: English, Portuguese, Malagasy

Surprise First Arrivals

By Reed Haslam

The first arrivals at the Bangkok Missionary Training Center were a group of missionaries from the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union is probably in the Kyiv Ukraine Temple District, there was no chance they would be welcomed there. Thus, the Church sent them to Bangkok, Thailand, which welcomes people from the Soviet Union who came with passports. Large numbers of Russians have taken up temporary residency in Thailand while the war in Ukraine continues.

For missionaries who are called inside the Bangkok Thailand Temple district, Thailand will be the shortest trip to an operating temple. They may receive their endowments, and some may return to their home countries to serve their missions.

I was unsuccessful in getting further information about the Missionary Training Center in Bangkok, Thailand.

Seeking Members Help

ROLE PLAY VOLUNTEER



YOUR SUPPORT
MATTERS

HELPING OTHERS PROGRAM

We appreciate your willingness to volunteer in the Missionary Training Center's Helping Others Program. Your role plays are an important part in helping missionaries experience how to invite and help others come closer to Jesus Christ.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



 ANNEX BUILDING 3RD FLOOR

 THAILAND MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER