



Ballou FAMILY

REACHING THAI PEOPLE
WITH THE GOSPEL OF
JESUS CHRIST

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO REACH A BUDDHIST?

As we near the celebration of 9 years as a church, that question has been on my mind more than any other thought recently. God has been incredibly gracious in blessing our church with new believers from Buddhism every year. Now I am hopeful that we can teach these believers to bring their own friends and family members to Christ. But the process of considering Christ requires a former Buddhist to possess enough knowledge of scripture, courage to accept the truth, and a personal experience of God's love. It is usually a process that takes many hours over the course of several months, if not years. So, how can local Christians see that happen within their own community?

Observing the way that Christ engaged unbelieving people, Alisa and I have often tried to start with questions to open the heart and mind. From that point of an open discussion, the word of God can bring understanding and conviction. There are numerous video resources we have used in engaging with Thai friends over the course of months and even years before seeing them come to a place of readiness to repent and place their faith in Christ alone for salvation. The challenge I am eagerly undertaking now is to equip more people to reach others for Christ.



One of the great adjustments that our family had to make when coming to Thailand was the realization that we are not engaged in reaching people who are seeking the gospel. We had been accustomed to mission fields in which at least a minority of people are genuinely open to the gospel, perhaps even seeking it. In most cases, Thai people are very content to be buddhist in a sort of secular, nationalist type of way. They are not usually buddhist because they dug for truth and found answers in their religion. Primarily, the outflow of religion here is a result of deeply engrained cultural norms, guarded rigidly by public shame or a sense of betrayal projected on anyone who chooses the way of the cross of Christ. This dynamic makes the journey of considering Christ very discouraging to any Thai person who has ever attempted it.

In our first decade of ministry here, my highest priority has always been to stay focused on this one thing. I have a personal mission statement that I review daily: “I am here to Reach Thai Men from Buddhism in their Community.” While it may seem overly simple, that 5-point mantra has kept me from losing focus many times over the years. Each of those five points has a specific challenge to it. If you ever want to share a coffee via video call, there is nothing I would rather discuss than the the 5 parts of this singular focus. As seasons come and go, however, God requires us to see our vision grow. Earlier this year I was teaching the men of our church and I realized that they are truly ready to reach their own communities, but they need to be equipped to do it.

That realization has turned into a summer of study on ways to lead people to Christ from differing cultural contexts, with a specific focus on reaching culturally religious people. I have been crafting a tool for our church people to use in engaging others with the gospel. The system progresses from open questions, to Bible answers, then short videos, followed by specific engagement questions. If used in the context of a long-term friendship, this plan confronts people with truth and requires a response, but it does so at a pace that will not automatically shut down a devoutly religious person.

There is no single key that will unlock the way of reaching all Thai people. My hope is not to create a magic key. My goal is to train our own church members to have the method and the confidence to regularly win others to Christ and launch them into their own path of discipleship. This is where we need your prayer. We are working to format an application that can be used smoothly for personal evangelism. The true benefit will come when members of this local church take the next step in reaching this city for Christ. Can you join me in prayer for our church to have powerful tools and a passionate fervor to bring more Thais to consider Christ?

Many Thanks,

Jay Ballou