

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thailand – 2010

Asoke Chapel

During 2009 the chapel at Asoke was remodeled. The outside was not modified much at all, but the inside was re-furbished throughout, new lighting in the chapel, new tile in the cultural hall, new doors and door trim. The main entry was extended outward to almost then end of the roof overhang. The



Photo 1 - Asoke Building Exterior

most used entry is now the side entry at the front of the building. The International ward was the first to move back into the building last November, followed more recently by the Asoke ward. The stake offices can still be found at the rear of the building.

Attendance at the International ward was about 150, with several nationalities represented. It was the last Sunday Robert Griffiths and his family were in Bangkok. They moved to Washington D.C. in preparation for his new assignment next year in Shanghai, China. More recently Duane Hurst has also returned back to the United States from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok.

At the Asoke ward the attendance was about 90 people. Since Bishop Sarawut has been called as stake president the Asoke ward has a new bishop. Sherry and I had the opportunity to share our testimonies at the sacrament service. Elder McConkie translated for Sherry.

Pakkret Chapel Under Construction

Wisit Khanakham took us to the site of the new stake center size building being built in Nonthaburi province not far from the current church offices there. I could not believe how far along the building is already given that the ground breaking was in February. The style of this building is similar to others in Thailand where there are two wings. One is the chapel wing and the other is the classroom wing. In the case of this new building both wings are much larger, allowing for a large cultural hall that adjoins the chapel. Currently this building is outside the boundaries of the Bangkok Thailand stake, but my guess is that when it is finished the boundaries will be adjusted so that it is inside the stake. Existing branches that are not far from the new chapel are: Rungsit, Pakkret and Don Muang.

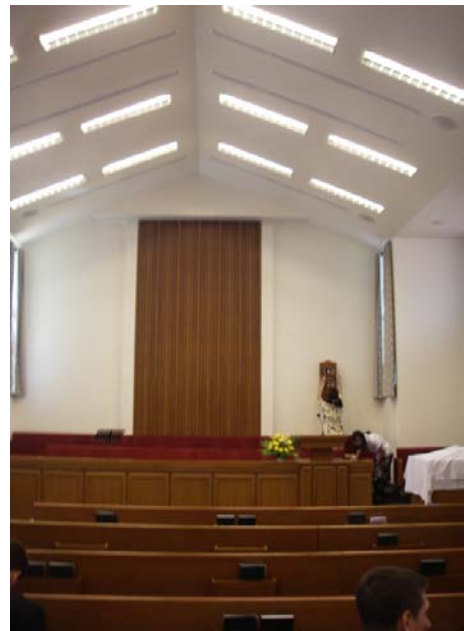


Photo 2 - Asoke Building Interior



Photo 3 - New building - Classroom Wing

The new building is larger than any of the existing buildings in Thailand. As you can see from the photograph the construction is mostly cinder block covered by plaster with steel for the roof joist. The roof tiles awaiting installation can be seen in photographs 3b and 4. We arrived at the site at about 6pm on Friday and yet there were many construction workers still engaged in work, including several females.



Photo 4 - New building chapel and cultural hall



Photo 5 - Area between the two wings

Phuket Group



Photo 6 - Brother Hathaikiat

We spent a week in Phuket province enjoying the ocean and the sights. On Sunday September 26 we attended church with the Phuket group in Phuket town. Brother Hathaikiat one of the earliest members of the church in Thailand is the group leader. They have about 15 members on the records in Phuket province and about 8-10 attend church each week. The group now meets in a room at the Metropole Phuket Hotel.

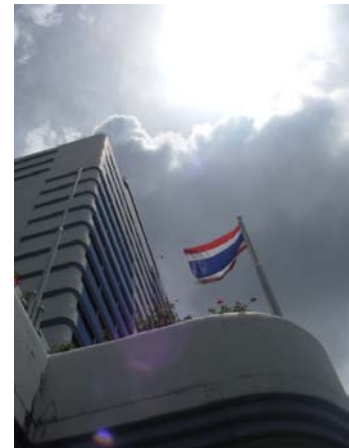


Photo 7 - Metropole Phuket Hotel

New Petchaburi Property

The church property on New Petchaburi Road (not far from Soi Asoke) became more valuable in August 2010 when the new "City Airline Terminal" Makasan was completed literally over the back fence. The church property was purchased in 2008. While the Asoke building was being remodeled the Asoke Ward and the Din Daeng branch met in the office building on the new property. Today, only the Din Daeng branch meets in the building.



Photo 8 - The Building owned by the church on New Petchaburi Road Bangkok



Photo 9 - Makasan Terminal in back of the New Petchaburi property

In the adjacent photo you can see the west end of the existing building on this property. In back of the building you can see a small part of the new Makasan terminal on the new Airport Rail Line. From that terminal you can travel to the Suwanaphumi Airport in just 15 minutes on the "express train" (nonstop) for just 150 Baht. The terminal is just a 10 minute walk from the New Petchaburi property. Patterned after the "City Airline Terminal" in Tokyo, the new facility will allow passengers to check their bags at the Makasan station and "check-in" for their flights prior to boarding the train to the airport (starting in 2011). This new train is the fastest and smoothest in Thailand. It was a great ride.

Not shown just to the left in the photograph above is a new condominium complex being constructed next door to the west. That new building is about 15 stories tall.

New at the intersection of Asoke and New Petchaburi roads is an overpass for traffic on New Petchaburi Road that allows through traffic to cross Asoke without stopping. The new overpass does obscure the existing building from westbound traffic on New Petchaburi Road.



Photo 10 – Check-in stations at the Makasan Terminal



Photo 12 - Well kept landscape in front of the New Petchaburi Building. The new overpass can be seen beyond the church property



Photo 11 - Chapel area on the first floor

The long term plan for this property is to tear down the existing building and construct a new multi-use building on the site. One day, at sometime in the future, this site will become the new "center of the church" in Thailand.

Personal Note

A highlight of the trip for me was to meet Brother Bunja Tarirut and his family. Bunja was a young man we taught in Ayuthaya Thailand 36 years ago. This was while [Mani Seangsuwan](#) was my companion.



Photo 13 - Statue of Christ in the Lobby



Photo 14- Reed and Sherry with Brother Bunja and his family outside the Asoke chapel

Brother Bunja was one of several young people ages 16-24 that we taught while in Ayuthaya. Some of them joined the church after we were assigned elsewhere. Brother Bunja was one of these. This group participated in our activities such as English class, Bible class, and our Sunday meetings when only the four Elders were members in Ayuthaya. Today Brother Bunja is an officer in the Thai Air Force; he is married with a wife and two children, all of whom are members of the Church. He is a member of the Rangsit branch presidency in the Bangkok Thailand stake. It is hard to express my joy at this reunion.