

First Missions – Thailand

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Thailand

Thailand

Published September 11, 2025

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When did the workers first arrive? 1956

Who were the first brother workers? Ralph Joll from Indonesia, Edgar Bell and Ray Jamieson from Australia

Who were the first sister workers? Gwen Pampling and Merle Schultz from Queensland, Australia in 1965

Who was the first to profess, what year and where? Mrs. Fong in 1956 in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand

Who were the first native workers to go in the work and When?

First Native Brother Worker:

First Native Sister Worker: Anong in 1962?

When & Where was the first Gospel Meeting? 1956 in Chiang Mai, norther Thailand

When & Where was the first Sunday fellowship meeting?

When & Where was the first baptism?

When & Where was the first convention? In Mrs. Fong's house

Where have subsequent conventions been held?

Where is the convention now held?

Who have the Overseers been?

Native Language?

Thailand

I have to admit I probably don't have the spelling of names down very well but I would like to share a bit about Thailand. I enjoyed my time up there the first week of January, [2007].

The work of God has been difficult in Thailand. The Thai people are a good people and that can keep them out of God's way. They feel satisfied with good works. Most of the people are Buddhist. The Buddhist faith believes that your present condition here on earth is because of your past lives. Perhaps you did something bad in a past life and you have "bad karma", therefore you are poor in this life or you have hard times. By accepting who you are and doing good, then your next life will be better.

Ralph Joll came to Thailand in 1956 with Ray Jamison . When they came to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, they got a room at a Mrs. Fong's place. She was a widow and had a big teak house with lots of rooms. One day she was curious to know what those men were doing and looked in their window and saw the two of them on their knees, praying. She wanted to know more and went to meetings and professed. The convention was then in her house.

She had a son who was a disappointment to her but she stayed faithful to the end. She ended up being hospitalized while the workers were down in Bangkok and her son did not inform the workers. Merle came back to Chiang Mai and found her very ill in the hospital where she had been for two weeks. Ray then came up to see her, too and then went back to Bangkok only to hear that she had passed away. It is traditional for the body to be taken to the home and then some indulge in drinks. Merle (Schultz, sister worker) had heard of her son talking of this drinking and gambling activity and told him that his mother would not want that at her death.

Therefore, much to her surprise, Merle was given the body to take care of. She had it in her place for two days and had services both days. The son would be there, but would go in the evening for drinking and gambling with friends, but came and slept every night at the feet of the body. He was respectful to his mother's beliefs and left things to Merle.

In another time of inviting, Ralph and his companion had decided to just go to this T in the road. There was a seeking soul beyond the T but the workers did not go that far. Rest assured, God knows the need of each seeking soul, as the man where the workers were staying worked with this woman. This man listened to the workers and said he was not interested but he knew a person at his work who would be. This is Mrs. Lamai, a frail lady who was at convention this year. She did not have much money, but scraped together enough to bring herself and her children to meeting. She told those there at the first meeting that she had made her choice.

She continued to go to meetings and repeat that she had made her choice and Ralph just told her to keep coming. Then Ralph went to Vietnam to visit and the workers who were in Chiang Mai wrote and said that this lady is saying that she made her choice. Ralph then responded, "I guess we better take her seriously". When Ralph came back, she had a thing or two to tell him. :o) As she has repeated over the years, she made her choice that first meeting. She really didn't understand what it would mean but over the years it

is still what she wants. She continues in faith, as do two of her daughters. One was not able to get to convention this year, as her husband was sick.

Currently, the Lamai ladies are three of five professing Thai natives and then there is one Thai native worker, **Anong**. Anong came to meeting with her sister and brother who professed at one time in 1961. In 1962, Anong was free and thought that she could help the workers with the Thai language, cook and keep house for them. As she said she had no intention of going into the work, but God had other plans for her. Instead of being a servant to the workers, she became a servant of God.

SeriWan is another native sister in Bangkok. She was from a family of ten children from a village out of Bangkok. When she was 11 years old, her aunt came to her village, as she was to adopt a little girl, but someone had already gotten her.

SeriWan's parents decided to let the aunt adopt her instead. SeriWan always felt that her auntie did not love her and she also realizes that she did not know how to love her auntie. She was always searching for something to satisfy her yearning within. At 26 she was sent to Australia by her job to learn English for 8-1/2 months. One of her teachers was **Reine Sybil**. SeriWan noticed a difference in her than the other teachers, as she had such a peaceful and contented spirit. SeriWan asked her about this and Reine told her about truth and at that time she was getting ready to go in the work. SeriWan thought that the plan of being a minister must be the contentment, but Reine said no, it was a relationship with the Lord that gave her satisfaction and contentment. SeriWan then began to go to meetings and met a brother who was laboring in Thailand and was on his home visit.

Soon the time was up and SeriWan had to go back to Thailand. When she arrived back, she was very busy, as in addition to her job she had to help her auntie in her shop. Reine continued to write SeriWan and told her of the love for her. This was something SeriWan did not know of before, although she said she realized when she came back, that her auntie did love her, as her auntie told of how she cried for her every night that she was away.

After a year, she was able to come to the meetings, but she just told her auntie that she was meeting friends. In time, she made her choice and was told about fellowship meetings. She wasn't sure about them, as it meant more meetings with friends, and her auntie would not be happy. After a few fellowship meetings, she felt she had to tell her aunt what the 'meeting with friends' really was. Her auntie was very upset and made it very difficult to go to meetings for the next 15 years. She would lock the door when she left and then SeriWan would have to knock to have it opened and her aunt would be very angry.

One time her aunt said, "If you go to meeting then don't come back". SeriWan thought of what a worker told her, "trust in the Lord", and she went to meeting. When she came back her auntie didn't say a thing. The fifteen years were difficult but as her auntie needed more care, she brought her up to Chiang Mai for conventions. She would come and eat meals with the friends and workers. As she got to know others, she softened up. In time she even came to the convention meetings, too. She did forsake her ancestor worship before she died, too. SeriWan is the lone native in the huge city of Bangkok.

As one sees the love and dedication for those few precious souls in Thailand, one is reminded again how each soul is precious in God's sight. All those years of dedication and love by so many of God's servants. Ralph Joll spoke of his mother's concern of raising her eight children and a worker just told her, "Bring your children up with a fear of God, not to worry; if they can submit to you, then it will be easier to submit to God." All these years that submissive spirit is so apparent, dedicating his life to those countries. Currently, he is laboring in Indonesia. He spoke of Jesus being the same with loving kindness. At one time he thought it was all self denial here on earth, but then he realized there are so many blessings here on earth and they get better as time goes on.

At our convention in Malaysia he shared the thought that no one is happier than God's people. No matter the conditions, we don't know what lies ahead, but there is peace and happiness. Some little germ may enter your body and make you the ugliest person, yet there will be a peace within. Ralph shared a line of a prayer from a man who had a stroke, causing a lame leg and no control of his arm, and a wife who was very unsympathetic and living in difficult conditions. Until his dying day, he always prayed, "I thank Thee, God that I lack nothing". We heard at our convention what rich people we were, which is so true. These are just some details that I gleaned from Merle, Hazel, John and Ralph who all have labored in Thailand and were at the

By Ann

June, 2007

TTT Editor's Note: In the absence of a written account, the above information has been compiled by the TTT Editor from various sources. Corrections or additions are most welcome; as well as other historical accounts for this country [Email TTT](#)