

Title: A Christian Theology of Prayer in the Thai Context: A Case Study of the First Church of Chiang Mai.

Researcher: Nunn Sirisujin

Degree: Master of Arts in Christian Theology

Advisor: Rev. Assistant Prof. Dr. Satanun Boonyakiat

Approval Date: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Institution: Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Number of Pages: 62

Keywords: Prayer, Thai, Monarchy, Theravada Buddhism

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project is to (1) study the definition of prayer among the Thai Christian, (2) study whether or not a typical Thai Christian understanding and practice of prayer is influenced by Thai Theravada Buddhism and/or Thai understanding of their monarchy and (3) to study the contents of private prayers in Thai Christian's understating.

Prayer is one of the most common Christian disciplines. It is considered as one of the basic elements of a Christian life. Yet, Thai Christians rarely talk about prayer. Few sermons address the forms, meanings, methods, types or dynamics of prayers. In Christian education lessons, prayer is normally taught, but it is seldom followed up or developed. Thai believers are mostly left alone to further develop their prayer life, which restricts their experience from the riches that a healthy prayer could offer. Consequently, leading to a boring and joyless prayer life.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and provides background information to this research, methodology and literature reviews. The second chapter explores the meanings, forms and practices of prayer through documentary research, the traditional five basic categorization of prayers;

adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition and intercession and also the possible influence of Thai Theravada Buddhism and the understanding of monarchy.

The third chapter explains this research paper's methodology. The fourth chapter presents the outcome of this research paper and interprets the results. The fifth chapter provides conclusions, discussions and recommendations.

In the end, this research study reveals that majority of Thai Christians in the First Church of Chiang Mai believe that prayer is a one-way communication from human to God, while the divine provides answers through scriptures, other people and life events. The understanding of monarchy from the Thai culture is very influential to the understanding of prayer, as the concept of kingship is strongly rooted in Thai church culture. Public prayers are spoken in formal language, while informal language is used in private prayers. The influence of Thai Theravada is also present. The main purpose of prayer is to ask God for something, which is related to the Thai Theravada Buddhism understanding of praying. The categories of prayer regularly used in daily prayers are the prayer of thanksgiving, confession and petition. While the prayer of adoration is not clearly understood and the prayer of intercession is restricted only for already known people.