

Asia-Pacific International University

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Asia-Pacific International University in Muak Lek, Thailand, was established in March 2003, to provide Christian education at the tertiary level in the Asia-Pacific region.

Institutions rarely trace their origins across borders, but Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) has roots in both Singapore and Thailand. The two campuses of Mission College (MC) in Thailand (Bangkok and Muak Lek) absorbed the Adventist Theological Seminary out of Ekamai, Thailand, in 1989 and then inherited the traditions of Southeast Asia Union College out of Singapore in 1998 to form the present institution. The discourse in Thailand will focus mainly on events after the world economic downturn (the great depression, 1929–1939), although missionary endeavors commenced about the same time as they did in Singapore.¹

Developments That Led to Establishment of the Institutions

Singapore. The pioneers commenced their efforts in the literature and health ministries but soon saw the potential for education to enable access to all classes.² A church school was started in 1905 with the sacrificial efforts of two women (Mrs. Davey and Marian Jones), who taught for several hours in the afternoons. The school grew and soon became crowded.³ This morphed into something much more significant.

Thailand. World War II interfered with the Bangkok educational endeavors of the Thai medium nursing program begun in 1941 under the supervision of Ruth Munroe. Classes resumed in 1947.⁴ This program was pivotal in the creation of an international college/university.

Founding and Original Location of the Seed Institutions

Singapore. Mr. Joseph S. Mills was appointed in 1906 to be in charge of growing the school commenced the previous year.⁵ The next year it became a training school and was located at “Mount Pleasant.”⁶ The school may have ceased to function at periods after this time (see table 1). However, by 1915 the educational endeavors reappeared strongly in the Singapore Training School under the leadership of Mr. Kay M. Adams.⁷ The schools were located on Upper Serangoon Road after the early 1920s.

Thailand. Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Waddell pioneered the medical work in Bangkok by opening a clinic. Its success led to the commencement of a nurse education program.⁸ The school was supported initially by our hospital there and was located on the hospital premises. The hospital had departments of nursing, midwifery, and medical technology. The sentiment already existed from the early 1960s that a college could manage all these activities.⁹ Private educational enterprises were given degree-granting abilities by the government from 1969.¹⁰ This allowed the creation of the Mission College School of Nursing in 1986.

In 1982, the 62-hectare (153-acre) site now occupied at Muak Lek was purchased for the development of a liberal arts campus, and construction commenced in 1987. Quite simply, the new campus was to assist Thai Adventist youth in gaining an education and to train them “to carry the message of the second coming of Jesus to their own [Thai] people.”¹¹

Table 1. Organizational responsibility, name, location, and milestones in the development of the two longest-serving colleges contributing to Asia-Pacific International University¹²

Mission College, Bangkok, and Muak Lek Campuses

Southeast Asia Union College (SAUC), Singapore

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Name/Location/Milestone</i> | <i>Organizational Responsibility</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Name/Location/Milestone</i> | <i>Organizational Responsibility</i> |
|-------------|---|--|-------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1941 | Nursing program commences | Bangkok Adventist Medical or Mission Clinic/Siam Mission | 1905 | Mission house school opened October 1 | Australasian Union Conference |
| 1947 | Nursing program reopened | Bangkok Sanitarium and Hospital/Siam Mission | 1908 | Eastern Training School, off Thomson Road | |
| 1950 | School of Nursing's first graduating class receives awards (March) | Bangkok Sanitarium and Hospital/ Thailand Mission | 1915 | Singapore Training School (STS) and Malayan Union Seminary established, 400 Serangoon Road | East India Union Mission |
| 1959 | Queen Sirikit opens School of Nursing, Bangkok (December 2) | | 1916 | STS moved to 300 Serangoon Road | |
| 1986 | Name changed to Mission College (MC; March 25) | Bangkok Adventist Hospital/Thailand Mission | 1921 | STS first permanent building at 401 (273) Upper Serangoon Road | Malaysian Union Mission (from 1917) |
| 1987/1988 | Mission College branch campus takes shape at Muak Lek | Bangkok Adventist Hospital/Thailand Mission | 1923 | Name changed to Malaysian Union Seminary | |
| 1989 | Bachelor of Nursing Science program accredited in Thailand; Princess Soamsawali gives diplomas to graduates | Bangkok Adventist Hospital carried the financial responsibility until 1999 | 1929 | Name changed to Malayan Seminary of Seventh-day Adventists | Malayan Union Mission |

| | | | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------|------|---|------------------------------|
| 1990 | Mission College at Muak Lek officially opened (August 9); majors in management, accounting, and English approved by Ministry of University Affairs | | 1948 | Name changed to Malayan Union Seminary | |
| 1994 | Accredited bachelor's programs graduate students at Muak Lek (July 10) | | 1950 | Junior college status approved by the General Conference | Southeast Asia Union Mission |
| 1995 | MC designated College of the Year by National Academic Council, Thailand | | 1954 | Junior college produces regular graduates. | |
| 1996 | SAUM votes to relocate SAUC to Muak Lek | Southeast Asia Union Mission | 1958 | Name changed to Southeast Asia Union College | |
| 1997 | MC Muak Lek facilities expansion, making it the main campus in 1999 | | 1971 | First graduates in bachelor's programs | |
| 1999 | Approved international programs commence at Muak Lek (February) | | 1972 | SAUC first operates separately from secondary school | |
| 2003 | AIU grand opening celebrations; Princess Soamsawali visits Muak Lek campus (March 7-9) | | 1975 | Southeast Asia Adventist Seminary opening approved | |
| 2005 | College receives Prime Minister's Export Award for excellence | | 1984 | SAUC affiliated with Walla Walla College; offers fully accredited degrees | |
| 2009 | College receives permission to operate as a university (June 30) | | 1998 | SAUC officially closed (June; final graduation held September 4-5) | |

Location of the Institution

The Thai programs in nursing and liberal arts at Mission College were located in the Mission Hospital precinct and Muak Lek, respectively. The Muak Lek program was supplemented by some personnel, programs, and moveable assets from Southeast Asia Union College (SAUC) when it closed to form an international Mission College (MC) in 1998. The mandate of MC international was to serve all the Southeast Asia Union Mission territories.¹³ Today this is reflected in the name of its successor, Asia-Pacific International University (AIU).

Early Sources of Funding or Subsidization of Mission College/AIU

The MC venture at Muak Lek was supported in its early years by the Thai Adventist Mission with help from Mission Hospital and the Adventist English School in Ekamai. In later years, the Southeast Asia Union Mission (SAUM) provided some financial support.¹⁴ Dr. Helen Sprengel raised considerable funds (about US\$3.5 million)¹⁵ from private donors to permit the development of the new venture.

Building of the AIU campus at Muak Lek commenced in January 1997 and ended in July 2002. Few original buildings of the Thai Mission College were retained, for the entire precinct needed to be redesigned to allow for an ambitious building program. The project represented in excess of US\$20 million of investment. The new AIU campus was opened officially on March 7–9, 2003.¹⁶ Funding came mainly from monies received from asset sales in Singapore and appropriations. The favorable foreign exchange rates at the time gave the project a welcome financial boost.¹⁷

Original Mission of Southeast Asian Union Schools

Singapore. Early educational initiatives in Singapore were designed to train suitable persons to fulfill the gospel commission. World War II impressed on many Christians the need for indigenous leadership in both the church and other areas of endeavor.¹⁸ This sentiment was expressed in 1948 when the Seventh-day Adventist Church's seminary began college-level work with the introduction of courses for ministerial students, prospective teachers, and secretarial training.¹⁹

Thailand. The nursing program in Thailand ministered to the physical and mental needs of the people as well as their spiritual needs.²⁰ Ministerial training was also given early priority. The Ministerial Training School operated in different parts of the country. Finally, a seminary to cater to ministerial training was created under the leadership of Pastor Siroj Sorajjakool in Bangkok in 1987, with the understanding that the program was attached to Mission College; the activities were transferred to Muak Lek in 1989.²¹

The present university (AIU) equips students to fill a useful role in the societies from which they originate. The focus is still on holistic education, and the institution still seeks to empower students to go out energized to share these insights with others from a Christian perspective. It represents a place where a continuous Christian witness and evangelistic program can take place. Many students, some AIU workers, and people in the local area have been baptized.

Target Group for Students

Singapore. The program at the seminary and its successors sought to enroll Adventist students from all the territories of SAUM. A Chinese language ministerial course was reintroduced at Malayan Union Seminary in 1954 on account of the favor shown by the government toward bilingual programs.²² Students were accepted into other programs at SAUC from Adventist and other backgrounds.²³

Thailand. The nursing program at MC helped meet the needs of the developing medical work in Bangkok. Thai Buddhists as well as students from a Christian background were accepted. At the original liberal arts MC precinct at Muak Lek, the primary target group was Thai Adventist youth, but many from other backgrounds were accepted.²⁴ With the coming of the international college/university, the emphasis shifted to Adventist

youth from all SAUM territories and others who valued a holistic, principle-based Christian education in a country setting.

Faculty and Student Numbers Throughout the Years

Records of faculty and student numbers are incomplete. However, a few indicative figures are presented in table 2 for SAUC and the national and international enterprises in Bangkok and Muak Lek, Thailand. The nursing program in Bangkok had been attracting healthy numbers since 1958, when the first figures are available. Although the Muak Lek campus of Mission College officially commenced in 1989, some Thai seminary students were attending before that date. The name Mission College was first applied to the nursing program in Bangkok in 1986.

Table 2. Indicative numbers²⁵ of students and faculty at SAUC, MC Thai at Muak Lek, Nursing School Bangkok, MC/International, and MC/AIU

| Date | SAUC | MC (Muak Lek) and MC/International Mission College/AIU | Nursing School (Bangkok) | | |
|------|------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | Faculty | Students | Students |
| 1958 | 6 | 28 (two-year diploma) | — | — | 104 (three-year diploma) |
| 1968 | 9 | 60 (two-year diploma) | — | — | 115 (three-year diploma) |
| 1970 | 25 | 108 (two-year diploma) | — | — | 121 |
| 1971 | 25 | 134 (four-year degree) | — | — | 93 |
| 1978 | 17 | 121 | — | — | 84 |
| 1984 | 20 | 177 | 13 | — | 73 |
| 1988 | 24 | 156 | 15 | 45 (MC Thai) | 89 |
| 1992 | 22 | 180 | 16 | 139 (MC Thai) | NA |
| 1998 | 14 | NA (program ceased) | 19 | 473 (MC Thai) | NA |
| 1999 | — | — | 29 | 570 (MC Inter.) | Combined with MC/International |
| 2009 | — | — | 88 | 887 (AIU) | — |
| 2014 | — | — | 108 | 1146 (AIU) | — |
| 2019 | — | — | 104 | 909 (AIU) | — |

Degrees, Specialties, and Accreditation

Singapore. Southeast Asia Union College began offering a bachelor's degree program in 1969. By 1972, programs included Theology, Education, Business, Secretarial Science, and Consumer Science.²⁶ A number of accreditations were obtained from 1984 to 1986 involving Adventist and external agencies.²⁷ An affiliation was formed with Walla Walla College in 1984 to offer five degree programs. This was a validation exercise.²⁸ Despite this, government recognition for SAUC's degrees was denied.²⁹

The SAUM Study Commission on Higher Education (February 26–27, 1996) sought a brighter future for SAUC and tertiary education in its region. However, the land occupied by the college was acquired by the government soon after (March 4, 1996), and the question of relocation came to the fore.³⁰

Thailand. The nursing program was upgraded to a four-year program in 1986, allowing continued approval from the Thai Nursing Council, a professional body.³¹ Further upgrades were accredited by the government.³² The Thai MC programs (commenced 1990) in Accounting, Management, and English were accredited early by the Thai Ministry of Education (March 1994).³³ The present institution runs only government-accredited courses, hence meeting quality assurance standards.³⁴ Early accreditation (1995) for MC degrees was also obtained from the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) in Washington, D.C. ³⁵

Evolution of the Curriculum

Singapore. In 1948 the Seventh-day Adventist Church's seminary began college-level work with the introduction of courses for ministerial students, prospective teachers, and secretaries. It experienced strong enrollments.³⁶ Junior college level status was achieved in 1950, and accredited degree courses were being contemplated. But the nation ultimately refused to recognize SAUC's diplomas and degrees.³⁷ It was restricted by the government to offering academic rather than technical programs³⁸ as outlined in the permit from the Singapore Ministry of Education.³⁹

Thailand. The School of Nursing commenced with a three-year program, which evolved into a four-year program in 1986 in line with the Nursing Council's requirements.⁴⁰ This became a four-year Bachelor of Nursing Science program in 1989 as the standards required for registered nurses became more exacting.⁴¹

The Thai MC liberal arts programs in Muak Lek commenced officially in 1990,⁴² with degree programs in Accounting, Management, and English. Graduates received their recognition certificates in 1994.⁴³ Following the creation of the international MC, degree programs were offered in the Arts, Accounting and Administration, Science, and Nursing Science. With the coming of university status, two master's programs also were introduced: currently Master of Education and Master of Business Administration.⁴⁴

Name and Location Changes

SAUM intended to support one college, namely, SAUC. However, it was felt that Thai Adventist youth were especially disadvantaged by the Thai schooling system and were faced with financial difficulties by enrolling in Singapore. In 1982 the site now occupied at Muak Lek was purchased for the development of a liberal arts campus, and construction commenced in 1987.⁴⁵ The college officially opened in 1990.

In 1996 the Singapore government announced that it was about to acquire the SAUC property for its mass transit development project, although such proposals had been in circulation for over a decade.⁴⁶ In the same year, SAUC was struggling with enrollments. Against this background, the board of directors of SAUM voted in 1996 to relocate outside Singapore.⁴⁷ A strong debate ensued.⁴⁸ Pastor Robin Riches, the SAUM president, supported the development of quality education in SAUM territories and oversaw the development of the MC site in Thailand.⁴⁹

Official Status Changes

Some personnel, program ideas, and moveable assets from SAUC united with the Thai elements to form the international Mission College at Muak Lek (1998). This institution became an international university in 2009 to serve all SAUM territories.

Accreditations and Recognition

Questions of standards were again emphasized with the attainment of university status. All courses are accredited by the government. AAA accreditation was also renewed. Further, at AIU, the Thai Nursing Council recognizes the Nursing Science program, and the accounting major in the Bachelor of Business program (Thai medium) is given professional recognition by the Association of Certified Practicing Accountants.⁵⁰

On the world scene, the issue of standards has become more insistent. This involves benchmarking between countries to facilitate the flow of international students.⁵¹ Such benchmarking has been done at the university on the basis of formal agreements between selected Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities and regional associations of institutions in Thailand.

Awards and Honors

Dr. Siriporn Tantipoonwinai, the first president of MC international, has been honored in Thailand and overseas. She has contributed to policy development of tertiary education nationally, received awards and citations, and was accepted into membership of Sigma Theta Tau International.⁵² She received the Outstanding Citizen of the Year award from the Thai Foundation (2002) and the General Conference's Award of Excellence for leadership in education (2003).⁵³

Mission College was designated College of the Year by Thailand's National Academic Council in 1995. The institution received the Prime Minister's Export Award in 2005 in recognition of the extensive international nature of the student population studying at the college.⁵⁴ In 2017, the former and first president of AIU, Dr. Warren Shipton, was honored by the conferring of the academic title of professor in the field of microbiology by the Thai government authorities and the royal palace. He was the first foreigner and one of two individuals in private institutions to be so honored in the 100-year history of tertiary education in Thailand.⁵⁵

Significant Persons in the Development of the International College/University

Many have contributed to the growth of the educational work in Singapore and Thailand (table 3). Many were instrumental in the beginning of Thai MC at Muak Lek, which has been outlined in some detail elsewhere.⁵⁶ Many pages have been written on the MC story that will convince readers of God's leading.⁵⁷ This is not to downplay the significant part played by Dr. Chek Yat Phoon and his team in Singapore, who handed the baton to MC International under difficult circumstances.

Dr. Siriporn Tantipoonwinai was president at MC during the most difficult and tumultuous experiences surrounding the construction and generation of programs at the new international campus in Thailand. The academic program was developed under the leadership of Dr. Wong Yew-Chong.⁵⁸ Dr. Siriporn commented on the total experience: "This is the place that faith built. It cost us much hard work, sweat and tears."⁵⁹ She also actively served in an advisory and assisting capacity at the institution over the critical time period when university application was made. Many other faculty and staff enthusiastically and sacrificially helped in the work of documentation relating to the university submission. Of special note are Dr. Kai Arasola, Dr. Damrong Sattayawaksakul, Dr. Warren Shipton, Dr. Siriporn Tantipoonwinai, Dr. Mack Tennyson, Dr. Gil Valentine, Thitaree Sirikulpat, and Somphorn Utsaharamya.

Alterations or Refocusing of the Original Mission

SAUC aimed to be a place of which students could be proud. It aimed to develop students who would take humble pride in whatever place life set for them. Above all, it aimed to develop students of whom a "Christian school can be justifiably proud."⁶⁰

Dr. Chek Yat Phoon, the last president of SAUC, commenting on the merger of SAUC and MC, said:

Mission College serves with the mandate to provide Christian education, a preparation for usefulness in this life and, more importantly, for the life to come. Collectively, we need to urge Mission College to stay focused on this as its primary objective.⁶¹

Despite the relocation of SAUC and the merger with MC, the concern for holistic education and redemption of humanity remains unchanged. Indeed, a commitment to a holistic approach to education and life was clearly enunciated in a recent mission statement of AIU:

Asia-Pacific International University is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning in Southeast Asia which is committed to providing holistic education based on Christian principles, developing and nurturing in its students a thirst for personal faith, academic excellence, steadfast integrity, cross-cultural understanding, environmental responsibility, and selfless service to God and society.⁶²

This statement now has been expanded considerably, taking on a more explanatory form.⁶³ The strength of any mission statement is seen in the lives of the faculty and staff and the influence they exert on the students under their care. We believe that a strong positive influence is being projected.

Institutions Stemming from Tertiary Institutions

Singapore. SAUC (renamed 1958) arose from developments commenced some 50 years before. These efforts eventually led to an expanded vision and enrollments and the creation of tertiary courses. At SAUC as of March 1972, the primary and secondary education operations were separated from the college to comply with government requirements.⁶⁴ This move raised the profile of the college, especially in view of the recent establishment of a degree program.

Thailand. Schools preceded the development of a tertiary education program. But in Thailand there was no strong connection between the primary and secondary education sector endeavors and the tertiary education initiative. However, the introduction of the international MC program at Muak Lek led to the development of the Adventist International Mission School (AIMS), located at the entrance to the campus, and AIMS has spawned the development of a sister institution in Korat. The majority of students at both schools are Buddhists.

Contributions to Research and Innovation

The concept of research in Adventist institutions is developing, with some pleasing outcomes. The greatest achievement at AIU has been the launching of the registered journal *Human Behavior, Development, and Society* in late 2018 under the guidance of Dr. Wayne Hamra. The gestation period commenced many years previously with the creation of *The Scriptor* by Dr. Beulah Manuel and its successor, *Catalyst*, under Dr. Wann Fanwar. The current journal receives contributions from Adventist scholars and those from other institutions around the world. The journal has received recognition nationally and regionally, and we are seeking world recognition through Scopus.

A director of research position has been in operation at AIU since 2009. Initiatives of note have been the creation of an International Scholars' Conference with the cooperation of three Adventist universities in Southeast Asia (operating since 2013; initiated by Dr. Ronny Kountur) and the successful application for government research grant monies in 2018. The present director is Dr. Kamolnan Taweeyanyongkul.

Significance of Alumni to the Church and World

Institutional alumni (SAUC, MC, and AIU) have served with distinction as directors of departments at all levels of the Church from the mission level up to the General Conference Executive Secretary level. They have led as presidents of church organizational units and become, among other things, leading accountants, leaders in business, pastors and evangelists, teachers or professors at all educational levels, school directors, nurses, allied health professionals, doctors of medicine, scientists, and researchers and, of utmost importance, have functioned as sound citizens contributing to the health of the societies they find themselves in.

Relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist Church

SAUC, MC, and then AIU have had a positive working relationship with the Adventist Church and its immediate affiliates. The close linkage might be illustrated by referring to several examples. Cooperative ventures have been seen, for example, in prison ministry. In a surprise outcome, the Voice of Prophecy lessons sent by Pastor Mervin Kyaw of Bangkok to inmates of the Central Prison of Klong Pai, northeastern Thailand, raised some 100 interests. Both college and mission personnel participated in a water-barrel baptism (2004) in the prison when 24 inmates indicated their willingness to follow Christ. This was not an isolated event; 29 inmates decided for Christ in 2005.⁶⁵ Further afield, Dr. Khamsay Phetchareun from MC was involved for a time in training Lao-speaking workers from Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia in retreats.⁶⁶ The university still seeks to work with Church affiliates. In fulfillment of this goal, workshops were run by university personnel at the Adventist Education Days symposium (October 26–27, 2018) organized by Thailand Adventist Mission to assist more than 400 teachers in growing professionally.⁶⁷

One of the exciting new ventures at the institution was the opening of the Adventist World Radio (AWR) recording studio under a Thailand Adventist Mission initiative in August 2008,⁶⁸ which gave a sense of increased mission. Subsequently, the studio was moved to Bangkok for ease of operation. Its place has been taken by the construction of a purpose-designed building on campus (ground-breaking January 25, 2017) dedicated to the production of Hope TV programs.⁶⁹ This ambitious venture commenced operations in early 2019.

Relationship to the Cities in Which the University Is Located

One of the more creative ways found to witness is at festivals. For example, the nearby Muak Lek Dairy Festival participants (2004) saw the unusual spectacle of cartoon movies depicting Creation and heard Thai and English

gospel songs and Bible messages given via sign language and performances by children from the college's associated school, AIMS, together with cultural performances. In these varied ways, over 100,000 people were introduced to Christianity, and opportunity was given to festival attendees to speak to those convinced of its charms.⁷⁰

Other ways in which favorable relationships are established are through conducting English classes in the community and participating in helpful activities. The day-to-day interaction between teachers and students in the classroom cannot be underestimated.

Relationship to Region

Our young people find many ways of participating in mission activities: building projects, community cleanup programs, AIDS hospice visitation, music tours, community health surveys, church visitation and revival meetings, English-language Bible camps, Master Guide retreats, and other activities. Some even have joined a student missionary program in order to bring the gospel to others.⁷¹

Relationship to Country

Central to the idea of national success is the creation of visionary educational opportunities and approaches to ensure that knowledge, skills, and technological advances will allow the nation to compete and grow in the global market place.⁷² The emphasis is on sustainable development, moderation, greater self-reliance, and the application of knowledge prudently, realizing that solutions to regional issues are not uniform. The achievement of balance and attention to society and the environment are part of the mandate handed to tertiary institutions in Thailand.⁷³ This is the environment in which our university is situated.

Happily, much that is mainstream in government policy is holistic in its approach, which also is mainstream in Adventist Christian philosophy.⁷⁴ The merged institution set up in Thailand in 1998 had the mandate to launch international programs in line with the changing world environment and government initiatives. These programs were to attain international standards of excellence, possess international curricula, build a faculty that reflected the resources of the worldwide church, set up relationships with Adventist institutions, and recruit international students from the region and from other areas.⁷⁵ This was achieved with remarkable speed and effectiveness.

Relationship to World

In the university submission presentation of 2007, the following figures were reported to the visiting ad hoc committee: academics held degrees from 83 tertiary institutions around the world; faculty members were from 17 countries, representing all inhabited continents; and students came from 39 countries. These figures vary

from year to year. Much remains to be accomplished in making the institution's contributions to the society and region relevant and timely and to sustain the good impressions made initially.

The trends seen in internationalization at AIU are ones that are widespread elsewhere. With the greater mobility of people; the increased demand for education; and the emphasis on technology, science, and communication skills, there is an urgency to ensure the legitimacy of the claims made on education by prospective employees. Our challenge is similar to that faced by SAUC. Although we are a recognized degree-granting institution within the Kingdom of Thailand, the issue of widespread recognition of our degrees in all countries of Southeast Asia and elsewhere remains. Resolution of these issues is attainable especially because recognition conventions and agreements are widespread and necessary in a world devoted to shrinking borders.⁷⁶ These general understandings have been strengthened by regional agreements and the formation of networks in moves aimed at making Thailand "the centre of academic and higher learning in the region."⁷⁷

Spiritual Impact of the Mission College and AIU

In the first graduating class from the School of Nursing in 1950, 12 of the 33 young women were baptized. Eight years later, this number was 68 out of the 177 graduates.⁷⁸ These endeavors to share the gospel message still continue. To observe Christianity in action is a thrilling experience, and each year baptisms result from study in our tertiary institution. However, more effective cross-cultural approaches must be explored.

Where the University Is in Relation to Its Mission

Fulfilling the needs of Adventist youth across the vast territory of SAUM is a difficult task. There are language, financial, and prerequisite hurdles, and then there are the continuing problems of ever-increasing specialization within disciplines, competition from other institutions, and the availability of online courses. Finding resolution to these issues requires investment in human and financial resources.

Reaching students for Christ is an ever-present challenge. In 2018, the university cooperated with Thai Adventist Mission and Adventist Frontier Missions to generate a facilitator's guide for reaching Thai Buddhists.⁷⁹ This cooperative venture is being tested in the field and at the university.

Future Success

Like many institutions, AIU has a continual challenge to attract students and qualified faculty. Expanding study options and creating a more efficient administrative environment that engages the creative potential of faculty and staff is bound to be beneficial and constitutes an urgent need.⁸⁰

Chronology of Presidents, Directors, and Principals

Many individuals have worked tirelessly to create an educational system in both Singapore and Thailand that would and will continue to serve the needs of our Adventist youth and further the triumphs of the gospel (table 3). The individuals chosen as leaders may have received little recognition here, but their reward awaits them in the hereafter.

Table 3. Principals, directors, and presidents serving at the component institutions that contributed to the international emphasis at Mission College and thence to Asia-Pacific International University⁸¹

| Mission College, Bangkok Campus | Mission College, Muak Lek Campus | Thailand Adventist Seminary, Bangkok | Southeast Asia Union College, Singapore |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Director</i> | <i>Associate/Vice President</i> | <i>Director</i> | <i>Principal</i> |
| <p><i>Early Beginnings</i> Ruth Monroe (1941)</p> <p>Official Record (1947–1986)</p> <p>Ruth Monroe 1947–1950); Wilma Leazer (1951–1952); Ellen N. Waddell (1952–1953); Gertrude M. Green (1954–1955); Ellen N. Waddell (1955–1959); Elizabeth Rogers (1960–1963); Salinee Svetalekha (1963–1967); Apsorn Dabanand (1967–1968); Salinee Svetalekha (1968–1972) Apsorn Dabanand (1972–1974) Salinee Svetalekha (1974–1986)</p> | <p>Dr. Jon Dybdahl (1989–1990); Pastor Art Bell (1990–1993); Dr. Charles Tidwell (interim, 1993); Dr. John Matthews (1993–1998)</p> | <p><i>Early Beginnings</i> Sunti Sorajakool, leader, Ministerial Training School, Ubon Ratchathani (1959–1961) School relocated to Ekamai, Bangkok (1962–1976) Dr. Steve Bassham, leader. School relocated to Chiangmai Adventist Academy (1976–1981)</p> <p>New Beginnings</p> <p>Dr. Siroj Sorajakool leader. Thailand Adventist Seminary at Ekamai (1987–1989), and then Muak Lek in July 1989</p> | <p><i>Early Beginnings</i> Joseph S. Mills (1906–1909); Isabel Fox (1912–1913); Mamie A. Yarnell (1913 called)</p> <p>Official Record (1915–1955)</p> <p>Kay M. Adams (1915–1919); V. E. Hendershot (1920–1931); F. L. Bunch (1932–1938); G. H. Minchin (1938–1941); F. R. Millard (1941–1942); B. L. Ngo (1945–1947); J. H. Lawhead (1947–1949); L. C. Wilcox (1949–1950); W. H. Wood (1950–1952); E. Sherrard (1952–1955)</p> |
| <i>President</i> | <i>President</i> | | <i>President</i> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Mission College, Bangkok Campus | Mission College, Muak Lek Campus | Thailand Adventist Seminary, Bangkok | Southeast Asia Union College, Singapore |
| Salinee Navaratana (née Svetalekha—1986–1995) Dr. Siriporn Tantipoonwinai (1995–1996; with transitional responsibilities at Muak Lek) | Dr. Siriporn Tantipoonwinai (1997–2005); Dr. Warren Shipton (2006–June 2009) | | E. Sherrard (1956–1957); P. G. Miller (1957–1962); H. W. Bedwell (1962–1963); D. Tan (1963–1964); Dr. L. R. Downing (1964–1965); G. D. Thompson (1965–1966); D. Tan (1966–1976); Dr. Donald R. Halenz (1976–1979); Dr. Leverne Bissell (1979–1981); Dr. Don Sahly (1981–1982); Dr. Koh Kang Song (1982–1994); Dr. Chek-Yat Phoon (1994–1998) |

Asia-Pacific International University

| <i>President</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|--|---|
| Dr. Warren Shipton (July 2009–July 2010) | The university was proclaimed by the Thai Ministry of Education on June 30, 2009. |
| Dr. Loren Agrey (2010–2015) | |
| Dr. Danny Rantung (2016–May 2019) | |
| Dr. Siroj Sorajjakool (June 2019–) | |

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