

... Five Ds, *continued from p. 1*

of God springs forth when self has been detached and dethroned.

Discipline. Then, having been set free by the love of Christ to live the life of Christ we discipline ourselves to keep our eyes on Christ. This is no easy task, for the devices of the enemy are numerous and subtle. Even sinless enjoyments and innocent habits can become as weights that pull our gaze ever so slightly but steadily from our blessed Savior (Hebrews 12:1-2). Athletes understand the importance of discipline, and so did Paul (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). The sheer determination of using the will to move the body past the point of pain, to feel the burn and push beyond—to go against the current of the world—one must be accustomed to press against the tide.

The five Ds are one way to describe what Jesus does in saving our souls. He detaches and dethrones self; leads us to a life of dependence and devotion; and then, by the power of Holy Spirit discipline, we live the more abundant life God created us for. Amen.

... Thailand, *continued from p. 3*

“What is your best American joke?”
“What do you think of Obama?”
“Do you have spirits you must please in America?”
“If there is a God, why is there suffering?”

The second question reveals a sense of frustration regarding the idea of reincarnation, which, I discovered, all of them take for granted is a fact. The question about spirits refers to the pervasive Thai belief that individuals, homes and communities are dominated by “spirits” that must be kept happy. Everywhere you go there are “spirit houses”—small, decorated structures erected on posts outside homes and shops and on street corners. Each day the people place offerings of food, water, flowers and other items before these “houses” to placate the spirits, to insure blessing and avert evil. The last question reveals their awareness of suffering and the problem it poses for belief in God. They were extremely open and receptive to the answers I shared.

Christian missionaries have been laboring in Thailand for well over one hundred years, and still it is estimated that about 98% of the Thai people are Buddhist. Whatever they have seen and heard of “Christianity” has not been powerful enough to move them toward Christ. I can’t help but believe that they hunger and thirst for a God who offers communication and trust. It became clear to me that if we would stop trying to “tell” the world they are wrong and must believe differently or be damned, but rather bear “witness” to them of a personal God who invites them into friendship with Himself and eternal salvation on the basis of His grace, perhaps they would become eager to hear what else we have to say. That’s what I experienced with them. When the whole earth is “lightened” with God’s “glory” (Revelation 18:1), I expect that multitudes of Buddhists will eagerly respond. Their hearts are ready to hear that message. Are we ready to give it?

Events Schedule

- **April 9-12**
ACTS Youth Conference, Edmonton, AB Canada
Ty Gibson—☎(248)840-9294
- **April 10-18**
Mount Shasta SDA Church, CA
www.mountshastasda.com
James Rafferty—☎(530)926-3348
- **April 23**
Bible Study, Franktown, CO
Ty Gibson—☎(303)517-1414
- **April 24-25**
Tacoma Central SDA Church, WA
Ty Gibson—☎(253)752-6637
- **April 30–May 3**
Northwest ASI Convention, Redmond, OR
James Rafferty—☎(360)857-7000
- **May 8-9**
Redmond SDA Church, OR
James Rafferty—☎(541)923-0301
- **May 16**
Cottage Grove SDA Church, OR
James Rafferty—☎(541)942-5213
- **May 22-24**
Vancouver Island Camp Meeting, BC Canada
Ty Gibson—norcot@telus.net
- **May 26-30**
Carolina Conference Camp Meeting, Waynesville, NC
Ty Gibson—☎(704)596-3200
- **May 30**
Fall Creek SDA Church, OR
James Rafferty—☎(541)937-3526

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*Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry based in beautiful Oregon State.
Our purpose is to help proclaim the gospel
of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word.*

MISSION UPDATE

The Newsletter of Light Bearers Ministry



Five Ds of Life

By James Rafferty

Detachment, dethronement, dependence, devotion, discipline—these words concisely describe the path we tread as we follow Jesus Christ, the source of power and hope for our sinful lives.

Detachment. This was Paul’s experience in Philippians 3:1-16 as he followed Christ. Though personally accomplished and spiritually advanced, he detached himself from these attainments, leaving “no confidence” in the flesh (verse 3). Forsaking all self-reliance, the cross of Christ calls us to complete detachment. Birth, religion, position, attainment, all things earthly become as “rubbish” or as Solomon said, “vanity” in the light of knowing Christ.

Dethronement. Subduing self, the most subtle enemy we face, was Paul’s conquest. He knew of only one successful strategy and spoke of it on every occasion, from every

angle. Nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified could empower fallen humanity to dethrone self (1 Corinthians 2:2). It is the greatest battle we will ever be called to fight. Death to self is the biblical term for this dethronement. Paul shows us that this process occurs only as our hearts become captivated by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-17). As we witness His life, death and resurrection we are moved to live not for “me” but for Him who died and rose again. When “I” die, there blossoms newness of life. Dying is not the goal—living is! Self is dethroned so that the Christ-life can be experienced.

Dependence. Jesus Christ often made the amazing declaration that He could do nothing of Himself, but lived in total dependence on the Father (John 5:20). Acknowledging this same need, Paul cries out in despair—“Oh wretched man that

I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). It was God who delivered Jesus from the power of self-reliance and it is Jesus who delivers us (Matthew 26:42). He who said, “I can of my own self do nothing,” knows what it means to be dependent. Christ’s works, speech, judgment, plans, and even His miracles—everything He accomplished was by the power and direction of God. In this way Jesus lived out mankind’s dependence on God.

Devotion. Defined as the state of being dedicated, consecrated, or solemnly set apart for a particular purpose, ardent love and affection, or attachment manifested by attention, the word devotion sounds synonymous with sanctification. This can be just as clearly understood as obedience, for we show our devotion to Christ by the love of His Word. Joyful, happy obedience to the Word

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CONSIDER THIS . . .

The nearer we come to Jesus, the more clearly we behold the purity and greatness of His character, the less we shall feel like exalting self. The contrast between our characters and His will lead to humiliation of soul and deep heart searching. The more we love Jesus, the more entirely will self be humbled and forgotten.

Ellen G. White,
The Upward Look, p. 46

He who is meek in spirit, he who is purest and most childlike, will be made strong for the battle. He will be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. He who feels his weakness, and wrestles with God as did Jacob, and like this servant of old cries, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," will go forth with the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere of heaven will surround him. He will go about doing good. His influence will be a positive force in favor of the religion of Christ.

Ellen G. White,
The Upward Look, p. 46

The work of Christ's representatives will be similar to that of their Redeemer. They are not to look to self or trust in self. They are not to place too high an estimate upon their own efforts. And when they see that others do not regard their efforts as highly as they themselves estimate them, they come to feel that their labors might as well

cease. But this is the work of the enemy. We live not to men but to God. God estimates our work at their fullest value. God estimates nobility of character, and whether men appreciate it or not, it lives after the man is gone.

Ellen G. White,
The Upward Look, p. 55

We must have a living dependence upon a living God. And when there is a living connection with a living God, Christ abides in the heart by living faith, and the human agent works after Christ's life. He is going to change our life and character, speaking the words that Christ speaks, revealing the character that Christ reveals. And if trials come to us, we will not manifest a rebellious spirit.

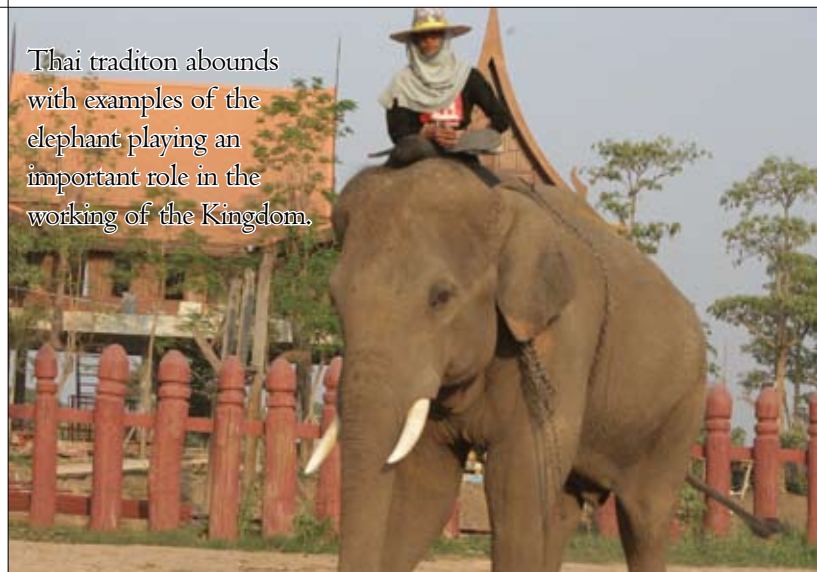
Ellen G. White,
The Upward Look, p. 62

The religion of Jesus Christ works a reformation in life and character. The true Christian seeks constantly for the grace that changes the objectionable features of the natural character. Instead of speaking sharp, dictatorial words, he speaks the words of encouragement that Christ would speak were He in his place. He shows benevolence to all, not only to the few who may flatter him and exalt his wisdom. The purity and holiness revealed in Christ's life radiates from the life of the true Christian.

Ellen G. White,
The Upward Look, p. 75

THAILAND

. . . where Buddhism continues to prevail



By Ty Gibson

Greetings from Thailand! What an amazing place and what a lovely people!

Over the last week I have been engaged in teaching a student body of mostly Buddhists. On day one I introduced a very foreign idea—namely, that God is a personal being. In Buddhism there is no concept of God as a conscious, relational being distinct from creation. When the word "God" is used, it refers to reality as a whole, inclusive of humans, or to the highest form of reality to which all humans are destined by means of reincarnation and the attainment of "nirvana." In this sense Buddhism may be viewed as a religious atheism since no separate, supreme being is thought to exist. Quoting the Bible from the outset as proof of anything would be pointless since it holds no place of authority in Buddhist thinking. So I began by leading them along a

Whatever they have seen and heard of "Christianity" has not been powerful enough to move them toward Christ.

rational path as a means of getting them into the Bible.

"What do you think," I asked them, "is the most meaningful thing in life?" After a little chatter the answer came: "Friendship." This is the response I expected. They are kids and all kids are into friendship. One of the teachers told me Thailand is experiencing an epidemic of "texting," meaning kids and young adults are obsessed with sending text messages to one another day and night to the neglect of their studies. The human desire for connection with others is intense, especially among young people.

Then I asked them, "Why would we so naturally define life as having its most vital meaning in relationships if ultimately reality involves no ultimate relationship? Do you think it makes sense that we are essentially relational beings if, after all, there turns out to be no relational being we can trace our existence back to, nor look forward to?" The

light immediately turned on in their minds. A very simple, but logical, realization dawned upon them: since we are personal, relational beings, there must be a personal, relational God who made us and with whom we may engage in relationship. Then I gave them this verse: "God said, 'Let us make man in Our own image' (Genesis 1:26), making the point that the God of the Bible is a personal Creator who designed us in His very own likeness, which explains why we are so hungry for friendship. You could feel the sense of "wow-that-makes-sense" in the room. They were very positive toward the idea.

The next day I asked them, "What would you say is the most important factor in friendship?" Again there was chatter and then the consensus came down to a tossup between "communication" and "trust." They were painting a picture of God without even realizing it. "Among all the religions of the world," I continued, "the Bible alone offers

a God who wants friendship with you rather than power over you, and only this God invites you into communication and trust." Then I read John 15:15: "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (NIV). "Does this God seem inviting to you?" I asked. They said, "Yes," with cautious enthusiasm, cautious because they could see that their own line of reasoning was leading away from a Buddhist worldview, but enthusiastic because the idea was so attractive to their hearts.

After a few days I was taken to classrooms for Q & A times. The teachers handed me stacks of written questions from the students. They were both playful and insightful.

"Why is your name Ty but you do not live in Thailand?"

"Why must we be born over and over again?"