

Home Bible Seminary, Central Thailand

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Looking at the 22 questions you ask and thinking on the role I played in getting HBS started, I thought that it would probably be best if I mention a few formative things in my own life, for they greatly influenced the planning of the HBS project.

I was born in a very small village of 100 people. There were no shops, school, church or chapel in that village—just farms and houses. I had to go to school in the next village. This school was housed in a one-room building which was partitioned into two smaller rooms, one for grades 1-3, the larger one for grades 4-9. There were only 40-45 pupils, which meant each grade was very small in numbers, only 3-4 per grade. There were only two teachers for the whole school, so each teacher had to teach several grades, the headmaster taking six grades. This meant that there was no conventional teaching from the front. We all had to learn on our own, relying on text books and a little bit of help from the teacher. So right from the beginning it was books and not persons who were my teachers. So I came to have a love of books. Living in the country and attending this type of school gave me a great affinity with the rural people of Central Thailand. When I went to Central Thailand in 1955, 99% of the people were rural.

On leaving school at 14, I went to work for W. H. Smiths. That introduced me to many books on all sorts of subjects, and this increased my love of books, though at that time not many books were published, for it was war-time.

When I was demobilised from the army, I trained as a psychiatric nurse, and this brought me into touch with academic subjects which were to play an important role in forming my thinking. The basis of the training was that of anatomy and physiology, including the anatomy of the brain and the nervous system, the sensory and the motor nerve system which relays stimuli from the five senses and then relays the responses through the motor nerves to the muscles, etc. In the study of the mind psychology was an important subject, not just abnormal psychology, but also normal psychology, that is, that is how the normal mind functions. This subject was to fascinate me for the rest of my life and I started buying books on the subject, and still do. As I got more involved in Bible teaching in C. Thailand, I started to buy books on such subjects as the psychology of study, the psychology of thinking, the psychology of reasoning, the anatomy of judgment, the psychology of learning, and of teaching, and many more subjects. These all played an important role in thinking on how to get ordinary rural people with very little education

learning and thinking, etc., and applying what they were learning.

While I was still studying nursing and still living in the country (the hospital being in the country and not in a town), I started going to a mid-week Bible study group. To begin with it was led by a student pastor, but when he left we were on our own and from then on never had a leader. Instead we all contributed and shared in the Bible Study. The group moved out of church property, because it was too cold (physically) and met in members' homes and started drawing people from other denominations. We all had to help in explaining the passage under study. To begin with I was pretty ignorant, but did not want to stay that way, so I started to buy second-hand books on the Bible, there being no book shops in the nearby town selling Christian books. I managed to get hold of Campbell Morgan's commentaries on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts, and his 2 vol. set on the living messages of the books of the OT and NT. I set aside about one hour each day to study these books. I lived in a small three-room country house not suitable for study purposes, so I did most of my study sitting on the steps of the front door which faced south and was sheltered from east and west winds even in the winter. In days to come this experience was to help me in persuading Thai to do private study in cramped and far from ideal circumstances. If motivation is high, then we'll always find a way and the time to do it. These books and this private study were a great help on the INPUT side, equipping me for the OUTPUT side when making my contribution at the weekly Bible Study group. Through this group I started to get asked to take Sunday services in village chapels and mission halls over a wide area. There I came across so-called "laymen," known in that area of the country as Local Preachers. Some of these chaps, though only ordinary people with no higher education, just farmers or railway workers, had quite large libraries of Christian books and were both good preachers and Bible teachers. This was all new to me, for I'd been brought up in the Anglo-Catholic type of Church of England parish, where the minister did everything and the congregation were ignorant. I now saw that ordinary Christians can be very effective in ministering God's Word, and this gave me a vision for the future in Thailand.

In the first term of service in Thailand, 1955-1959, there was no opportunity for Bible teaching and training up people, for there were no Christians, so all our work was pioneer evangelism. Nevertheless, I was firmly convinced

that our only instrument in missionary work was the Word of God, therefore, one needed to have a thorough knowledge of that Word. Yet the Bible Colleges and Seminaries never really trained up people to have a thorough working knowledge of the Word of God. Their teaching was too superficial and the Bible was not made to be the chief text book. I still believe that until this very day.

When we went on our first Home Assignment I bought a new copy of the Thai NT and made it my project to study that NT thoroughly during the HA, making use of coloured pencils and coloured pens and jotting down in the NT my findings. I am still at that type of work right up until now, having gone through many Bibles, both in Thai and English, and many versions and sizes, including very wide margin Bibles. I always praise the Lord that when I was mugged by four bandits and my motorbike and bags stolen, the police found my well-marked Old and New Testaments of the Thai Bible in a nearby wood and returned them to me undamaged. In them were many hundreds of hours of personal Bible study.

During my second term of service Short Term Bible Schools had been set up in C. Thailand and I was brought onto the teaching team and taught the doctrines of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Outlines of all the teaching I gave I wrote out onto large sheets of cheap white cloth and made them into teaching rolls which I hung up in front of the class. Over the years I developed this method and even included the Westminster Shorter Catechism. During that second term of service we were moved from Inburi to Manorum in order to start up an evening Bible School. It ran for two years with 8 hours of teaching each week during ten-week terms. I learned a lot during that period of time, but if I were to do it again, I would certainly change the methods drastically. All this sort of Bible teaching work made me buy lots of books. I eventually had one of the largest libraries among missionaries. Because of these responsibilities I started looking around Thai book shops in Bangkok, both Christian and secular, going often to the Chulalongkorn Book Store on campus, to the DK Bookshop and to the bookshops at Burapha, where the Ruamsarn and Odeon publishing houses and bookstores were.

On the third term of service I still lived in Manorum and carried on with the evening Bible teaching, moving the venue from the church over onto the Leprosy Wing. That gave me great opportunities to experiment with teaching and getting people to study, that is teaching them how to study on their own. During the daytime I worked over in Uthai, teaching at all the leprosy clinics and experimenting with teaching on Sundays. By this time I had acquired one of Nevius' books telling of his practices in North Korea and China. He turned the Sundays into full learning days for the Christians,

teaching those who could not read how to read, teaching those who could read to go deeper, and training up leaders. So I tried to do the same thing in Uthai in the four local churches I went to in turn. I made it an all-day affair, so that each local church had one full Sunday per month. During that Sunday we had a worship service, then four sessions of Bible teaching, giving them handouts to help in private study for the rest of the month. I was left a small legacy from an aunt and I used some of that money to buy sets of books in Thai, five books to a set, to be their basic and essential tools: a decent-sized Thai dictionary, Halley's *Handbook* and Torrey's *What The Bible Teaches*, and two others. These were sold to those suffering from leprosy at a 90% reduction in price and 80% reduction for so-called "well" people.

During that time Alex Smith joined me as a new missionary. He soon got going in evangelistic trips, and we started to extend the boundaries of our Uthai territory. Of course, by then lots of Thai were moving westwards as the forests got cut down, and some Christians also moved. The number of local churches began to grow and it became impossible for missionaries to take all the Sunday services. Therefore, a training programme eventually evolved.

In the seventies lots of teaching went on, and both church growth and TEE experts paid visits to Thailand. Even Dr. MacGravan himself came on a couple of occasions. Then Ralph Winter and Ralph Corvell came to conduct a week-long seminar in order to introduce the TEE way of training. I attended these and found the TEE seminar very helpful. Out of that seminar a national TEE committee was set up in Thailand and I was on that committee. One important branch of the work of that TEE committee was the setting up of a small working committee of four people to find out what was the level of knowledge of the Thai who had been only to primary school. This was to prove very fruitful for me in the coming years. We bought all the text books which Thai children studied and we read them all to find out what level of knowledge they would have in their own language, history, geography, maths and other subjects. We pooled this information. Over the years I went on to buy all the text books on Thai grammar and Thai usage which children studied right from Elementary School through High School, University Preparation Schools, and what was taught in the Teacher Training Colleges. I also bought sets from the various publishing houses and those put out by the Chulalongkorn University. This was to prove invaluable to me, for it showed me that these children and older students had been taught how to study books in a way which would give them comprehension, help them to summarize and to load into their minds. At this time I was also buying a weekly Thai teachers' periodical, and I

bought several quarterly journals from Chulalongkorn University.

It was pretty obvious from my experiments both in Uthai and on the Leprosy Wing that most Christians were extremely weak in their knowledge and use of their own language. So from what I had learnt from these school text books I made some TEE type manuals to help them study their own language, and I used them over in Uthai and on the Leprosy Wing. I also started a course of experimental study on “How to Study” and used it on the Leprosy Wing. In the drafting of the course on “How to Study” I was greatly helped by a book called *Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics* by Robert A. Traina of the Biblical Seminary in New York. It took me several years to get hold of an old second-hand copy. Through that book I started to train the Christians to Observe what is there, to do Understanding (a Thai expression and a very good one too) and to Apply. I began by concentrating on the first step, trying to train them up to be sharp in their powers of observation, to be aware of all that is in the text. Then as time went by I tried to help them to see past just observing the text, and to go on to observe the constituent parts of the Realities which are behind the words in the text, meaning the things about which the words are talking.

Now, arising out of the TEE National Committee a two-week seminar or workshop was organised and was conducted by the late Martin Dainton, an OMFer then working in a university in Indonesia. We were to be the guinea pigs for an educational institution in Palo Alto, who sent out a multi-media package to be used on us and by us. The theme was “Setting Educational Objectives.” The theme was spot on for our needs and the methods used really opened the subject up to us and we could see how applicable it was to our work. This material helped me no end and became foundational to the setting up of the HBS, once I had thought it through and experimented with it. We were given a short booklist and from that list I bought two seminal books. They were called *A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Vol. 1 in the cognitive realm and Vol. 2 in the affect realm. There should have been a third volume on the motor realm, that is the using of the knowledge gained, but that book never came out as far as I know. These two books tied up with what I had learned in my nursing studies on the anatomy of the body and the human mind and nervous system and the human reflex system of sensory nerves (input side), the affect side (that is the feeling roused) and the motor nerves. In other words, the three distinct parts of the mind: Cognition, Affect, Conation, this being the way the human mind processes knowledge and uses it. These two books on educational objectives stated that in the cognitive realm our object as teachers is not to pour in

knowledge, but to aim at developing the student’s six faculties or abilities of:

1. observing/loading in knowledge,
2. understanding and interpreting,
3. analysing—taking it apart into its constituent parts (You know illiterate grannie can take a chicken apart at its joints, so why can’t she be helped to transfer her existing knowledge and skill to take a piece of information apart at its joints?),
4. synthesis—putting it together as something new, viz. making it suitable to tell to one’s next door neighbour,
5. evaluating—seeing its worth for now,
6. Applying it or transferring the principles learned to other subjects, etc.

The Thai National Committee of TEE of which I was a member made a start to write and publish TEE manuals based on programmed learning. Most of the work was organised by a keen missionary of the Assemblies of God in Thailand. He managed to get quite a large grant of money from a foundation in the USA and this financed the publishing and printing of five or six manuals, which we started to use right away. Unfortunately this Assemblies of God missionary returned to the USA and the grants of money ceased. It was evident that this missionary’s participation was a personal affair and not part of the Assemblies of God missionary policy. But even we two OMF missionaries on this national TEE committee had our wings clipped by the mission reducing our status to that of observers in order to ward off disapproval in the home countries.

In my use of these TEE manuals based on programmed learning, I began to see that it was possible to do these studies with next to no attention to the Bible. The manual and not the Bible was central. Also I had my doubts about this new-fangled system of programmed learning. It seemed so superficial and the only one to really benefit would be the person who did the initial study and wrote up the manual. I bought quite a lot of text books on programmed learning from the USA and Britain, but was not impressed. These days one rarely hears about programmed learning. Maybe it was just a fad of the 70s and 80s.

From the mid-70s onwards efforts were made over in Uthai to train up local church leaders in a better way. Alex Smith was the driving force behind this initiative. Training classes were organised for church leaders. The leaders came into to Uthai town once a fortnight for a full 24-hour period starting mid-day on Wednesday and running to midday on Thursday. The aim was to help them in preaching at the weekends and pastoring the little flock of believers. When Alex moved to Bangkok I used to go over from Manorom to help, then started developing a couple of Thai to actually do the teaching at these

seminars. I had already been helping the members of Manorom church who did the Sunday preaching in Manorom. I did the exegetical work on the passage to be preached on, and handed the exegetical notes to the preacher, who in turn worked on it and made it into a sermon of an expository nature.

In this work, both over in Uthai and in Manorom, it was obvious that those taking part were not doing any study on their own in between the fortnightly seminars. In a way they were just being “spoon fed” and this was not good. So the question arose in the minds of several missionaries in C. Thailand: “What can we do to improve the situation?”

Towards the end of the 70s Ian Roberts raised the matter in Field Council and it was agreed to set up a project that would help local church leaders and potential leaders all over C. Thailand to study the Word of God on a daily basis (not just a daily devotional period). The Council agreed to set up a small working committee to explore this proposal. The committee was to be composed of the Field Superintendent, Gerry Wibberly and myself. I was on HA at the time, but about to come back. When I got back I was told about it and was given the date of the first meeting. I immediately got to work in my mind and thought out all sorts of things and jotted them down. This was not done hurriedly. In all this thinking I brought all that I had learned in the last 25 years or more, from text books, personal experience and the evaluation of all the experiments I had done over the years in C. Thailand. When things became clear in my mind about what would be the best system, I then wrote out a paper of suggestions to put to the other two members of this small committee. This paper was more or less a blueprint or a plan for the project. I was firmly convinced the Bible must be central, indeed it must be the text book the students would study. It, rather than the teacher, tutor or whoever, would be the source of their knowledge. The tutors would not be teachers of the material, but just guides and motivators and solvers of problems that arose in personal study. I was the only one who presented a paper or blueprint-cum-plan to that committee. I am sorry that I no longer have my copy of that paper. I had to get rid of such a lot of stuff when I retired and left Bangkok. Since then I've often regretted not bringing many more things home, not even a full set of HBS workbooks which I wrote (it was a pile of 55 manuals), and also the many commentaries on key books of the Bible which I wrote, duplicated as handouts and then taught. The one on Matthew amounted to 560 pages of foolscap paper. But I did bring my worked Bibles, both Thai and English versions.

At that committee meeting we agreed to get started as soon as possible. We agreed to run two pilot groups, one in Uthai, looked after by Gerry Wibberly and one in Koksamrong, looked after by Ian Roberts, and I would do

the writing of the manuals and help in the monthly get-togethers in the two areas. The plan was that each student would spend around one hour per day, five days a week, be visited by a tutor once per week, all in the area come together for a full day once per month, and lastly have an annual period of one week's residence together for further teaching and practice in practical work, such as preaching, etc. Those to be enrolled would be leaders of the churches, namely the ones doing the preaching at Sunday worship services; and the project would be treated as Christian Education for mature Christians. Those doing the course which we envisioned would take at least five years, would have to be people who could use the material right away, for it would be that type of person who would be highly motivated, and would see the benefit right away, therefore would stick with the project to the very end. It was agreed that the first manual to be written would introduce them to Study Methods and would give them practice in studying on their own. Now when I had taught the subject of “How to Study” on the Leprosy Wing and had prepared lots of work sheets to give them plenty of practice, it had taken around nine months to do the course. But we realised that we could not take that long in the HBS programme, so settled for a month, and for the students to pick up the system as they went along when studying the Bible for real. Incidentally we started without a name for the project. At a later committee meeting we realised that we needed a name to act as a handle. Gerry Wibberly suggested that we call it “The Home Bible Seminary” with stress on the last word, for that word would define the object of the whole project, namely to produce people who would serve God by ministering to the members of the local church and doing evangelism too. I am afraid that several people since then have tried to move the HBS away from being seminary-like and to water it down in order to serve as Christian education for young believers. At the outset we had envisioned that others would write for that category of Christian. And if things went well we could even write manuals for those with much higher education, such as those who had been to university and therefore could learn much more quickly. But as you know it has been very difficult to keep the HBS project adequately staffed over the years. We soon had experience of that, for shortly after we started Gerry Wibberly was taken out of the scheme and out of work in Uthai and designated to Phayao Bible Centre. At one point the Area Director tried to get me to go to Phayao, but I declined to go, urged on by Ian Roberts, who by then was Field Superintendent. Since then Alan Bennett, then David Robinson have been set aside to run the HBS programme, but were moved higher up before they could get started.

Before starting to answer your questions, I should mention that great changes were taking place in the

Philosophy of Education in the secular realm in Thailand. This resulted in great changes in the text books used in the Elementary and Secondary Schools, in the University Preparation Schools and in the Teacher Training Colleges. I tried to keep abreast of these changes and made many visits to Thai bookshops selling text books and even visited the publishing houses and was a frequent visitor to the Chulalongkorn University Bookstore (a great place to go and browse around). I bought the up-to-date text books on the Thai language as taught in the schools and colleges. There was a big change in the teaching of the Thai language. They moved away from a dry teaching of Thai grammar (often this had been an imposition of western grammars on the Thai language). They moved over to looking at language in a practical way, as being a means to a higher end. So the text books now were centred on: "Using Language." They taught it from four aspects, namely, 1) language and listening, and its opposite 2) language and speaking, then 3) language and reading, and its partner 4) language and writing. This change made things more exciting and useful and thus increased motivation. These new books helped me no end in formulating in my own mind what needs to be done and how to do it, then in writing the manuals, etc., and teaching at the monthly workshops. The insights I gleaned were pinned to the wall in front of my eyes as I prepared the manuals.

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

Q.1 What was your role in the HBS programme?

My role was that of founder member, supplier of ideas and blueprint, writing the manuals, member of the Admin. Committee of HBS.

Q.2 What were the goals of HBS?

The GOALS of the HBS were to supply the local churches of C. Thailand with Servants of God who had a love of God's Word and were able to minister that Word competently and effectively.

Q.3 Did you ever teach an HBS group? if so, when? Who were your students? Did you feel that this was fruitful or unfruitful? Why?

Yes, I taught HBS groups. I took the monthly seminars for the two pioneer groups, the one in Uthai which met in Nong Chang and the one which met in Koksamrong. I did this from the beginning with the Koksamrong group, and from the time that Gerry Wibberly left for Phayao with the Nong Chang group. The students of both were well known to me and had been taught by me both on the Leprosy Wing and at local level. At Nong Chang we had people like Prasert (father-in-law to Ernest Ng), Tongchai, still going strong in Doi Lamyai, Phroma, Sunthorn, etc.

At Koksamrong we had Khru Jarern, Hit from Lamnarai and others. We felt that the HBS project was working: firstly, those taking it said so and secondly, there was a big improvement in their preaching. All these people were already fairly well versed in Scripture and mature enough to study at a deeper level and to be taught a system of studying the Bible directly.

Q.4 How did you write the lessons?

As I have already mentioned, I already had a plan of approach and had got the Thai teaching on studying, reading with a view to getting the meaning, understanding, then thinking, from the Thai text books used at schools and colleges. So I was using material which was indigenous and not imported. Though many of those writing these text books had had a spell of post-graduate study abroad and no doubt had imbibed things from the West, at least they had adapted them to the Thai set-up.

Before writing any of the manuals, I did the actual study of each Biblical book using the Thai Bible, and marked my Bible up, using symbols which I later taught the Thai to use, thus helping them to pick out the subject to the main verb, the main verb itself, the object to the verb, and marking the heart of the matter for each paragraph. I made a rough draft of the manual in the Thai language, then typed it on to stencils on my Thai typewriter which I had had since 1963 and which I had learned to type properly. Later on the Super., Alan Bennett, got me a larger typewriter with a wide carriage so material could be typed with the paper on its side, essential for typing diagrams. Then I went up to the hospital and printed about 15 copies on the electric duplicator. As you can well imagine, this whole operation consumed quite a bit of time, half the time actually going on my own study of each book of the Bible.

Q.5 Did you have a Thai helper? If so, who?

At the time I did not have any Thai helper, not even a typist or a checker.

Q.6 Who approached you with the idea for HBS?

The project did not start with a cut and dried idea of an HBS programme, but started with a need arising, an acute need in those days with groups of believers sprouting up in many places, especially in Uthai. Ian Roberts was the one who proposed to Field Council that something be done. Field Council took it up and chose the ones to get it started after having thought out the method to be used. At that stage I was approached by the Field Super. and thus got started.

Q.7 Who was involved in the discussions to create HBS?

First, the Field Council, then the small committee set up by F.C. which consisted of the Super., Gerry Wibberly and myself.

Q.8 Why was Genesis the starting place? Why was there the pattern of OT then NT?

Actually on the trial run we did not start with Genesis, but started with the topic of "How to Study" and used the book of Mark as the example to be worked. Having introduced them to the system we got going with Genesis.

As you will have gathered from what I have written at length by way introduction, I was convinced that the Bible should be the textbook used. After all it was the only textbook to come down from God, and it was the only textbook that all the participants possessed. I was also convinced that the Bible is a piece of literature and that it has a unity, as does every single book in the Bible. It has a beginning and it has an end, and it progresses from beginning to end in an orderly fashion. Also the Bible as a whole has structure, as does each of the 66 books. It is interesting to see what big changes are taking place in what was the liberal world of Bible Studies. Many scholars are now seeing that the individual books are literary units, and all the constituent parts must be taken into account in working out the meaning of the whole and each part of the text. Before many scholars just saw a book like Isaiah as being an anthology of short pieces which are not integrally connected. I still try to keep up with Biblical scholarship, both buying and reading academic journals and new books or borrowing new books from the nearby Theological Seminary Library, part of Edinburgh University.

Originally I had suggested to the committee that we study right through the Bible in a straight line, from Genesis to Revelation, but it was pointed out that the students would probably find it too hard and thus lose interest, so we went for an alternating system, taking into account the similarity of structure of both OT and NT. The OT is made up of four parts or Muads and so is the NT. Gen.–Deut. (the Torah—the word law is too restrictive and gives the wrong idea; directions is better). These five books are foundational to the OT, and in fact to the whole Bible, and the four gospels are foundational to the New Covenant. So we had the students start with the first Muad of the OT, then move over to the first Muad of the NT. Then back to the second Muad of the OT, Joshua to Esther, being careful not to call it the Historical section but the Former Prophets. This was Israel's response to God and the foundation He had laid. After the full obedience of Joshua the response degenerated into one of rebellion. Then we switched to the second Muad of the NT, the book of Acts which was the early church's response to the gospel foundation—a

response of remarkable obedience which resulted in the Kingdom of God reaching the capital of the Roman Empire within 30 years. In the previous 1000+ years Israel had failed to move out of the Holy Land in Mission to the rest of the world. Then it was planned to move back to the OT and study the fourth Muad, the Latter Prophets (Isaiah–Malachi), which is God's response to Israel's rebellion as seen in Judges through to the end of 2 Kings. From there we would move back to the NT and study the third Muad, the epistles. Lastly back to the OT for the third Muad in our Bible but fourth in the Hebrew Bible, the Wisdom Literature. Then end up in the NT with the climax, God's goal reached: the book of Revelation. In the writing of all the manuals right up to the end with Revelation I stuck with this pattern, and at all the monthly workshops I took I kept the diagrams of the structure of the Bible before the students, having drawn them in very large sketch books.

Q.9 Why was a study right through the Bible chosen over against a more topical or standard theological approach?

I have already stated some of my reasons for this choice. If I had tackled this project in the fifties or very early sixties, then I would have used the theological topic approach, for at that time the bent of my mind was towards systematic theology and not towards direct Bible study and exegesis. But I began to see that Biblical exegesis must have precedence over doctrine. If it is not given priority, then our doctrine will start to deviate from the truth. And worse still, we will always be studying the Bible through the eyes of topics. The collating of topic on theology must arise out of proper Scriptural exegesis and an overall knowledge of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. A person should not start writing systematic theology until they are well into their fifties, otherwise they will get a slanted view.

As we study through the Bible, paying full attention to detail, our minds actually should be getting Biblical views on God, man, sin, God's Messiah: the Christ to come in the NT era, the Holy Spirit. In the sixties we in C. Thailand had lots of problems over charismatics and a selective, self-centred teaching of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. That would never have arisen if missionaries and certain Thai had had an overall knowledge of the Bible and were doing an on-going work of exegesis of the Bible from Gen. to Rev.

This did not mean that we discarded topical subjects. For in each manual I had green pages each month on which doctrinal teaching was given. Also there were yellow pages on which the principles of study and the use of language were taught. Each month I wrote from the Thai textbooks teaching on various subjects dealing with understanding, interpretation, thinking, etc., and put

them onto yellow paper. And at the monthly workshops I dealt with these key subjects.

Q.10 Who made these decisions? How were they made?

This approach of going right through the Bible instead of teaching topics was in the original paper-cum-blueprint which I presented to the small committee, and I backed it up with several reasons and my personal convictions. So they were presented as a paper to the committee and the committee of three accepted them. My teaching of theological subjects in the STBSs in the sixties had convinced me that we must major on a direct study of the Bible and not topics gleaned from the Bible. After all, although Buddhism came down from the beginning as a worked out system, God never used this method. He used the historical method, progressive revelation over a period of 2000 years or more. God did not give systematised teaching either in the OT or the NT. That does not mean that we should not systematise the teaching of the Bible, but we should be very careful in doing so and we should never start up by systematising. In fact we should stick with Biblical Theology rather than Systematic Theology. This is a very great weakness in present day teaching in both Bible Schools and Theological Seminaries, including BBC and BTS in Bangkok. We don't really take the Bible seriously and consequently we give hurried, superficial teaching, doing a big book of the Bible such as Isaiah or Matthew in one semester.

Q.11 How long did it take you to write the lessons?

It took just over six years to do all the manuals. During that time we were always only one month ahead of the students studying in the preparation of the manuals. We did not get everything ready before hand, then launch the project, instead we got going immediately. It took around one month to work out and write each manual. No one was engaged full time on this work. We all had our own station work to do.

Why was it felt best to have one person to write all the lessons and not several people?

It was never felt that way or planned that way, but it arose out of necessity. As I had done many years of spade work on this sort of work, and had systematically gone through the whole of the Bible both in Thai and English and had well-worked Bibles and had experimented with the system, and laid out the system in the paper I presented to the committee, it was decided that I produce the manuals. Actually I did not do all the manuals. Dr. Ursula Lowenthal was roped in to do the manuals on Joshua, Judges and Ruth. Then when it came to revision work, Maybeth Roberts did that, then was followed by Pat Connell who was running the HBS group in Lopburi.

Q.12 Did the material start to be used even as you were writing it? If so did any feedback affect how you did the latter workbooks?

Yes, it was used right away, one could say that the print was hardly dry. It was very much a hand to mouth existence to begin with. One felt a bit like an editor and staff of a daily newspaper with the deadlines always just a few hours ahead of them. Of course there were breaks, for the students did not study for 52 weeks of the year.

There was feed back right from the beginning. Gerry Wibberly and Ian Roberts who visited the students in their area every week, sent in feedback information. And when I attended the monthly workshops in Koksamrong and Nong Chang we went through the past month's directions on what to do with the passages being studied and what problems they had encountered and misunderstandings or lack of understanding. These all helped. One big problem for the students was that too much was expected of them, and it was taking far more than an hour to do each day's study work. Of course to begin with they were slow, for we were just beginning to sharpen up and develop their faculties of observation, loading in information into the mind, "doing understanding," and ability to apply what was being learned, and to get the mind thinking, allowing the knowledge being loaded in to stimulate the thinking process. The latter I felt to be absolutely essential. If Biblical knowledge does not provoke deep thinking, then something is wrong; there is a blockage in the learning process of the mind. Through feedback we scaled down the amount to be studied. Then much later we simplified a bit more.

Q.13 Why and how was the pattern of tutoring sessions, workbooks and annual seminars decided on and implemented?

These were decided by the small committee right at the beginning. Both Gerry and I had attended the TEE seminars conducted by Ralph Winter and Ralph Corvell and the two-week workshop conducted by Martin Dainton at the Southern Baptist Seminary premises. We were also both members of the National TEE Committee, so we were familiar with what was being done in other countries, especially in Latin and South America. We agreed with the way they went about it, viz. one hour per day private study, visit from a tutor once a week with the objective of keeping the motivation high, keeping them persevering and solving problems. Having a monthly get-together to meet people of like mind, thus encouraging one another, having group study and discussion. So naturally we adopted that system and I still would. Of course it has to be adapted to meet local problems and patterns of work. People with a full time secular job need some different arrangements. But the basic pattern is still

sound. In the early days we were able to carry out the plan faithfully with very good attendance at the monthly meetings and annual residence sessions. Of course we did have a highly motivated body of students who had been the leaders in the local churches for several years.

Q.14 When did you actually start to write the first lessons? When did you finish the last lesson?

Within 2 or 3 days of having that first committee meeting. It took a month to get the first manual ready and duplicated and sent out to Gerry and Ian. That was in the late seventies. The writing of the manuals went on until the end of 1985 or early 1986. Early in 1985 I went down with cancer and went home as thin as a rake, and entered hospital within hours of getting home. But I was able to carry on the writing of the manuals in hospital, using my bed as a table, much to the amazement of the chief surgeon. Actually it was the best thing to do prior to major surgery, for it filled my mind with red-hot Scriptural themes, and these themes were still going around in my mind when I came around from the anaesthetic and was lying in a helpless state in a bed in Intensive Care. I had a Thai typewriter, Thai dictionaries and Thai Bibles at home, so I was able to carry on doing the manuals for the rest of that year until they were finished. Nothing like studying and writing a manual on the book of Revelation when you don't know whether you're going to pull through or die of cancer!

Q.15 What, if anything did you do in order to make the lessons understandable to the Thai mind? Did the Thai culture, style of learning or worldview have any part in how you worked out the lessons? If so, how did you seek to address these issues in the lessons?

As I have already mentioned I was careful to get instructions on what needed to be done from the several Thai text books which I had read and re-read, some to the point of having to repair the said text book. I was convinced that if the Thai students had just used and applied all the instruction they had got at school on literary comprehension, then they would be able to do it. And they would see that it was not foreign, but coming out of their own Thai text books used in schools right across the land. I used to take some of the books along with me to the monthly workshops to show them. I even bought some for some students. Incidentally, we also procured very good, fulsome Thai dictionaries at a very cheap price. I went right to the publishers in Bangkok, and they gave them to me for half-price because of buying them in bulk and through explaining what I wanted them for. The style of learning in Thailand was already changing for the better, getting well away from learning by rote to actually engaging one's mind. That is one good thing that the threat of communism did for education in

Thailand. The government saw that most of the Thai were too easily persuaded by sweet communist propaganda, so they changed the education system in order to train students to use their minds, to think and to evaluate what they were hearing or reading. I kept up my reading of Thai books and tried to keep abreast of educational theories in Thailand, the Thai philosophy of education and learning, and continued to buy academic journals from Chulalongkorn University Bookstore, and also from the D.K. bookshop. What I learned I tried to incorporate into the manuals. I still have quite a lot of these books and journals here in Edinburgh. Now this was not the usual thing that missionaries do, but that is my bent of mind right up until the present. You see that because of living in the country, I have always had to rely on books and journals rather than formal education; it is also a good bit quicker.

Q.16 Did you have an over-all plan when you started work on the workbooks? Did you have themes you wanted to emphasise? Did you have outcomes that you desired?

Yes, I did have a very definite plan which had been forming in my mind for several years. I also had educational objectives. I was aiming at sharpening up the faculties of the students in the cognitive realm, getting their powers of observation developed, training their powers of perception, being very much aware that our perceptions are not always reliable, in fact very rarely accurate, for our emotions can warp our perceptions, our interests and fads can also warp our perceptions. The human mind never really perceives anything as it really is. This is an alarming fact. A tape recorder faithfully records all noises heard, and a camera faithfully records on film all that is in the picture, neither of these instruments is selective, but the human mind is both selective and liable to see or perceive in a way that suits itself. So it is essential to train up the powers of perception to be as faithful as possible to the text set before the eyes. Next is the training up of the faculty of the understanding and of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and use. There was another set of objectives I gleaned from the Thai school books, not only that of taking in information and understanding and thinking about it, but there is also the faculty of out-put, expressing one's views, feelings and opinions on what has been studied and taken in. This became very strong in the new types of text book used in Thai schools and colleges. It is a very important stress and a practical one. I am alarmed at how few Christians in this country, even those of long standing, can express themselves and their opinions, feelings, evaluations on reading a passage of Scripture.

I did not have doctrinal themes I wanted to stress, but I did want the students to be able to look at a Biblical book, first as a whole and jot down on scrap paper what was the

chief point of the book, its chief theme. I had surprises, such as that although 1 Samuel covered a period of over 100 years, yet nearly half the book dealt with Saul's attempt to capture David. And in 2 Samuel only 2 chapters were given over to the actual successful reign and administration of David, yet nearly half the book was given over to the fall of David and the tragic consequences for the Kingdom. No wonder it was part of what is called the former prophets. In that book God was revealing the weaknesses of even the best, and therefore our eyes should not be to man for deliverance, but to God. Another finding was that out of the first five books of the Bible which covered many hundreds of years, over 65% of these books treated only two one-year periods. Ex. 18–Num. 10:10 dealt with the year at Sinai, and Num. 20 to the end of Deut. dealt with the last year before entry into the Holy Land. I wanted the students to find and observe these important facts and ponder on their significance.

My chief aim really was to get their powers of observation increased to such a sharpness that they were able to look at any paragraph with sharp eyes and take it apart into its constituent parts and would be able to see straight away what was the heart of that paragraph, and then chapter, and would be able to see what function the subordinate parts had to play, how they contributed to the heart of the matter. If their powers of observation were really sharpened up, then reading Scripture would become exciting, and they would be able to unload into their mind the message of that passage, then think over it. I found that for many it was quite difficult for them to see what was the heart of the paragraph, the main theme. All too often they were side-tracked by some word which is important in theology, but was only subordinate in that particular passage, such as a word, like faith or love or save. They were looking at the passage with theological eyes, and not trying to interpret it according to the laws of grammar.

I should say that in matters of interpretation I believed in the historical and grammatical approach, and still do believe that way. But I did have some opposition from missionaries on this grammatical approach, even from those who have been teachers before becoming missionaries. They were still wanting to read the passage in a devotional way and with intuition.

We did not always have outcomes that were desired.

Q.17 Did the TEE movement have any influence on the formation of HBS? If so, what kind of influence? Did what others were doing in the area of non-formal education have any influence on the formation of HBS?

Q.18 What is your philosophy of learning and how did it affect your approach to writing the lessons?

As I have already written it was all the studies and much reading of various aspects of psychology that had most affect on me. Especially on the psychology of the mind, that is how the mind works, and how it processes information and knowledge, and also how the nervous system of the human body is structured, with sensory nerves for the input side, the affect side, where the feelings are registered, then the output side running along the motor nerves to the muscles. One little book, now a classic, was of great help very early on in the sixties. It is *The Psychology of Study* by a well-known professor of psychology at London University, published by Pelican-Penguin Books. He gave a very lucid description of how the mind works and processes knowledge; One thing that stuck with me more than anything else is that “study is doing things with the text,” writing a summary of it, evaluating it, arguing against it, going and telling other people about it, etc., etc. Yes, “Study is doing things with the text.” (Hunting for examples, getting the basic principle, etc. are other things that come to mind.) Through this I came to see that the teacher's role is to be a catalyst, to be a bit like Enos or Andrews Liver Salts. They are there to stimulate the faculties of the student's mind into action, to kick start him. I believed that the mental process of processing knowledge was a bit like the digestive system, where we put food into our mouth, the teeth and salivary juices get to work and cut it into pieces, (taking it apart—analysis), then it goes into the stomach where the digestive acidic juices break it down further, then it passes to the small intestine where all the essence of the food is absorbed and sent to the various parts of the body to provide strength, heat and repair or building up of tissue. I often used this analogy with the students. Another analogy was that of likening the process of knowledge to a rice mill or a flour mill. First the rice has to be loaded in, then the machinery processes it and it moves through the machinery and comes out as flour.

Q.19 Did you use any models in creating HBS?

I did not use any models for I did not know of any that were of the same nature as the scheme I was going to use. But I did draw on lots of things that I had read and studied, and I drew on my own past experience, and also on what I had been doing with the Bible in studying it for many years. I did get a lot of help from such books as Traina's *Methodical Bible Study* and the many books which Irving L. Jensen wrote. At one time I possessed nearly all his books, the Self-study Guides, his manual on study, and his bigger work on Acts.

Away back in 1953 when still in Bible College I bought several books from an ex-student who must have been financially broke. One of the buys was a complete set of

workbooks put out by the Elim Church in Britain for the training of church workers and preachers. It came out as monthly workbooks. Each manual was divided into four parts:

1. Giving the student an overall knowledge of the Bible,
2. Doctrinal teaching on all the main topics,
3. Instruction on how to preach and teach,
4. Key words—aimed at building up the vocabulary of the student, a bit like what the Reader's Digest does in its monthly "Increase your Word Power."

I was impressed with this set of workbooks and brought it to Thailand with me and had it there for nearly 37 years. It fell to pieces because the paper used was just newsprint and the staples went rusty. The manuals gave me lots of ideas and became part and parcel of my thinking.

I also had had quite a bit of literature from what was going on in South America and Latin America in non-formal theological education. And of course attending the TEE seminar in Bangkok and listening to both Ralph Winter and Ralph Corvell also put seed thought into my mind.

I also got quite a few books from India which were put out in that country for training up church workers. These put more ideas into my mind, but they were at a higher educational level.

Q.20 Who should I contact to get more information about the history and goals of HBS?

The key person and the only one available is Ian Roberts, and his wife Maybeth. Gerry Wiberly for the very early stages and the setting up of the scheme. Dorothy Nisbet and Rosemary Harding, although they were not in on the early stages, they have been involved for a long time. From another angle of HBS, that is of one person who did the HBS studies in record time, went through Bangkok Bible Seminary and is now an OMF missionary in Cambodia: Ajarn Narin. I have known him for many years, right from the time when he first went to Manorom to the time when I taught him in the Seminary. He is one of those few rare birds one comes across, namely a thinker and a scholar.

Q.21 Knowing what you know now, what changes would you make if you were starting HBS anew?

Actually one can never be in that state of starting something completely new out of a fulness of knowledge and experience. A pioneer steps out into the dark, so to speak. He has to be a trail blazer, hacking his way through the jungle to make the first path for others to walk on. Who knows that in time to come that path may become a super-highway linking even countries. We never know, do we?

For a start I would not change the philosophy behind HBS, nor would I change the objectives and goals.

Remember the objectives were outside those doing HBS. HBS was and is a means to a loftier end than those who do the HBS course. It is a going on to equip the saints in the local church so that they too can serve the body of Christ and help to bring the Lord's people to fulness of spiritual stature and usefulness in the Lord Jesus Christ. The aim is far higher than helping people to get diplomas, degrees, to graduate with honour. The aim is to produce servants who are contrite and humble in spirit, submissive to God, the Holy One, and have a true servant spirit and disposition, delighting to serve others and thus help them to grow in grace, etc.

Looking back I would like to have a longer introductory course which would aim at getting a start to develop their mental and spiritual faculties. Also I would say we should have the HBS at several levels to cater for the academic levels of those doing the studies, so that we could have everyone moving along at a speed they are capable of doing, and yet is a little beyond their ability so that they are always being stretched in their minds, etc. Another thing I would like to see all those doing the tutoring actually doing the deep study of the Bible themselves, so that they come to have their own convictions, and the Word of God is continually having an enormous impact on them.

Q.22 Did you use any HBS material when you taught at BBC? If not, why not? If so, how did you use it?

No, I did not use any of the HBS manuals at BBC. The reasons were that I did not have any of the manuals and the students would never have had enough time in which to work their way through those manuals, for most of the students were spending between 21 and 23 hours a week in class. This is far too long for to allow a student to do personal study. The whole teaching programme of BBC would have to be re-structured if this were to take place. I often felt that those doing HBS had a much greater knowledge of the Scriptures than did the full-time students. Of course it must be remembered that it was mature students who were doing HBS and they were in a position to use the material right away for they were ministering in their own churches. But at BBC it was not a case of both in-put and out-put taking place each week. It was all in-put for 3 years, therefore the basic arc of receiving and loading in via sensory nerves and out-put via motor nerves was never completed, so the system was not psychologically sound. This is one of the great weakness in Bible College and Theological Seminary education. There is a great imbalance between receiving knowledge and expressing and using that knowledge. I often felt that BBC could have been structured round the HBS programme or something similar, but of course that involve removing the H out of the system of HBS and that would have been a fundamental change of the very

anatomy of HBS. Nevertheless something could have been devised that would thoroughly ground the students in the Bible from Gen. to Rev. and turn them into being “life-long scholars of God’s Word,” with their whole beings being turned on to the powerful and effective Word of God.

Though I did not use HBS material directly, nevertheless all my work in writing the manuals and the many findings I made, greatly influenced what I taught, especially in the bulk of my classes which were to ground the students in OT. But enough time was never allocated to do a thorough job of this. It was not like the British system where one goes into great detail for a full year on a subject.

In the classes I took for those returning to upgrade themselves to BTh level I was able to use the principles behind the HBS methods of study and what I had learned from the many Thai text books I had read. There I was teaching just one book for a full semester. It was the book of Hebrews and the students were by now much more mature, for they had been in the pastorate for a while. But they were still quite ignorant in the principles of their own language and ability to analyse a paragraph or chapter of Scripture grammatically. But they learned!

Finally, allow me to mention three important points:

1. Insight into what is said in Heb. 5:14 greatly influenced me. The mature person is one who through constant and habitual use of his faculties has developed or trained them up to the position where he is able to judge or evaluate or discern what is going to be beneficial or what is going to be harmful to self, to the local church or society in general.

This led me to see that it is by use, daily use of our faculties that we develop and are able to use gathered and thought over knowledge to practical purposes. That is the key: BY USE. HBS is a system to force or urge or help the student to USE his God-given faculties. It is not for the teacher or the tutor to use his or her faculties in place of that student, rather he or she is to stimulate the student into using his own faculties.

2. The place of THINKING. Loading in material and knowledge and data and then understanding it is only the

beginning of the process, that is processing knowledge. That material when understood should mobilise the thinking faculty into action. Now probably one has to sit down with the Bible to do the loading in; but the thinking process can go on all day and into the evening and even when the person is lying in bed and not yet asleep. Rehearsing the contents of a whole book of the Bible before falling asleep is a great aid for sleeping and having sweet dreams instead of nightmares.

3. The chief thing of all, the great GOAL. Being exposed to the Word of God in a serious and systematic way is to have a great and on-going encounter with God. This is most uplifting. Now men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Peter, John and Paul come and are on stage for a while and then go, BUT God is on centre stage from before Gen.1:1 right through to Rev. 22:21. He is the CHIEF ACTOR and we see HIM in the beauty and glory of holiness and the glory of grace. Daily views of God in His absolute OTHERNESS and transcendence is transforming.

4. Lastly, how the mind works. I had been taught that if the human mind is taught and drilled in correct methods of using all the faculties, then the using of those faculties properly and effectively becomes second nature to the person and the “automatic pilot” takes over. The illustration being used is that of learning to drive a car. If we have a good instructor, he will drill us in the right procedure and keep on drilling us until we are doing the moves correctly and are getting proficient. If we have been drilled well and do plenty of practice, then those complicated moves in driving a car become second nature and we can do all the moves correctly without having to think about it. In studying something similar takes place. I firmly believed that if we drilled those using those doing HBS properly in using all their faculties when studying, in time it would become automatic. So in future when they opened their Bibles and started to study the text, the faculties of observing, perceiving, understanding, taking the passage apart would all start to work and the person would unload an enormous amount of data from the text into the mind and process it. The job would be done efficiently and with great economy of time so much more would be covered in the allotted time.