

PURE RELIGION

The Hardest Thing We Had So Much Fun Doing

Bangkok, Thailand.

They entered the office of the hospital administrator and sat down. “We are from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” they said, “and we have come to help.”

“You’re Christian?” he asked.

They replied that they were.

“Why are you here?”

Elder Coombs explained that he and his wife were recently retired and serving a humanitarian service mission for the Church. He explained that they had come from Washington, a small town in Southern Utah, halfway across the world to relieve suffering in Thailand.

“You understand that we are Buddhists?”

Elder Coombs smiled and told him that he was aware of that.

“Why would you, a Christian, want to help us?”

“Because,” Elder Coombs replied, “it is a fundamental part of who we are as a people.” He explained that they were seeking for ways to help the poorest of the poor and asked if there wasn’t a group of patients who particularly needed help.

“There most certainly is,” the administrator replied. “I have a cancer ward for children in this hospital. By law, I must accept all patients. But we don’t have proper equipment to diagnose and treat them. We lost five children last year because we didn’t have the proper equipment.

You couldn’t help us obtain that equipment, could you?”

Elder and Sister Coombs told him they would do the best they could. They submitted a request for humanitarian funds that was approved by the Area President. It wasn’t long before they went shopping. They found the needed machines at a discount and presented them to the hospital.



At a ceremony recognizing the gift, the administrator said: “This is a beautiful example of how Christians and Buddhists can work together. We are grateful you are here.”

The local branch president was invited to the ceremony and felt honored to be part of a Church that was so mindful of those who were in need. In church, the next Sunday, he stood and told his congregation how good it made him feel to be a part of that. “I was on national TV,” he said, “and now many people who have never heard of the Church have seen us and know that we go about doing good.”

As Elder and Sister Coombs went from community to community offering assistance, people’s attitudes about the Church began to change. One official said, “The Latter-day Saints have done more to assist the poor than any other organization I am aware of.”

Like many others who lose themselves in the service of others, Elder and Sister Coombs smile as they talk about this experience of helping others. “It is the hardest thing we had so much fun doing,” they say.