

The History of Chrestos Mission
by
Dr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Atkinson



Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to your children. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands, yes, establish the work of our hands. Psalm 90:16-17

Part One

A work from God starts in the heart of God who then, in His mercy and grace, makes it known to the heart of man, to be fulfilled in God's own time, and God's own way. For many years we have been teaching the Word of God in different countries, but all the time there has been the awareness that God had something more.

Having served from 1964 until 1995 in Laos, Thailand, and Hong Kong, we returned to the UK. In May 2002, God impressed upon us that we should start a Mission to work with the Karen and the Khmu. Geoffrey visited Thailand in October 2002, and during that time the call was confirmed to us. He renewed contact with several missionary friends, whom we had worked with in the past, who were praying that we would return. So Chrestos Mission came into being as a registered charity in the UK in January 2003, and we left the same month for Chiang Mai in north Thailand.

During our first year, while living in Chiang Mai, we traveled to the Karen refugee camps on the western border of Thailand, especially to refugee orphans, and those caring for them. We also met with the Khmu on the north-eastern border and in Nan Province in conjunction with Sionh Chan and the Khmu Christian Connection [KCC]. Also during that time Geoffrey, who has a Thai medical qualification, tried to help the Thai Karen Baptist Convention [TKBC] keep open the Christian Hospital in Mae Sariang for medical services. This town has a population of about 15, 000 and lies about 200 kilometers south-west of Chiang Mai. However, not enough qualified personnel could be found, and a government hospital had already been built and was functioning in the town.

Chrestos Christian Education Centre

After it was decided that the hospital could not be kept open, the TKBC offered Chrestos Mission the use of part of the hospital free for three years, if we were willing to renovate the property. Having this available to us, we believed that God was directing us to open a Chrestos Christian Education Centre there. We had meetings with the local leaders of the TKBC, during which we assured them that we had come to work alongside them. After the renovation of the building, November 2003 until June 2004, we opened the Centre on July 1st 2004 with seven men and seven women.

Chrestos Mission

What does the word 'Chrestos' mean? Chrestos is the Greek word for kindness, the fruit of the Spirit. Just as we have experienced the kindness of the living God in our own lives, so we want to share that kindness with others in every way possible.

Chrestos Mission became a Thai Charity in early 2004, and our responsibilities under the Thai Government are in three main areas: education, relief, and literature. Soon after, we rented, and finally bought, the Team House on the outskirts of Mae Sariang, to accommodate staff, teachers, short-term workers, and other visitors.

Early Days



The Christian Hospital Mae Sariang.



Chrestos Choir

Chrestos Christian Educational Centre 2004-2005

The vision is always for the appointed time, and we began to see God's wonderful plan opening up with the opportunity to teach and train Karen men and women for His work. When we opened the Centre, fourteen students came to study; seven men and seven women. We appointed Saw Christopher as manager of the Centre, with Saw Kaw Say, Saw Law Wah, and Saw Kri Htoo as part of our 'core-team'.

At the end of July, Thara Hsa Twel, who has an English medium B.D., joined the team as our translator and music director. Originally, we planned only for a one year course but then, at the request of the TKBC, we extended to a two year course, and finally a four year course. Having completed this training, TKBC would accept our graduates as pastors, evangelists, and workers with women, youth, and children in the churches. As well as the studies in the classroom, the students went on outreach to the Karen villages, and also made a music CD at Maesot.

Our First Fourteen Students

