

Chrestos Mission Update 4: January 2004

Lord, create in me that warmth of mercy that shall enable others to find your strength for their weakness, your peace for their strife, your joy for their sorrow, your love for their hatred, your compassion for their weakness. Peter Marshall



As we go into this New Year, we want to thank each one of you for your loving support that has been such an encouragement to many here in Thailand and further beyond into Laos and Burma [Myanmar].

The work is expanding rapidly, and our hearts are touched as we see the love of God for every tribe and every nation

Thai Registration: Chrestos Mission has completed the formalities for the formation of a Thai Board and registration here in Thailand. We anticipate that the government will accept this application within a month or two. This will provide two visas and official government recognition. Apart from us, the board consists of national Christians, eager to advise and promote the work.

Refugees:



Pastor Arthur and Mrs. Jury in the Mae Lah Refugee Camp, three hours from Mae Sariang, are caring for many orphans as well as their own children, and they appreciate extra clothes, toys, sports equipment, and food that we take in. We also take supplies to a hostel for orphans in the Mae Rae Mo Refugee Camp, four hours from Mae Sariang. We would like you to see the joy on their faces as they find a pair of jeans that fit or a sweater that will keep them warm.

Migrant Children:

Pastor John Felix pastors an English speaking church in the border town of Mae Sot and has a program to care for the street children. About fifty of them come to the church every morning, where they have a meal, games, classes, maybe receive some clothes, and shown love. He also helps them to get an income without begging or stealing, by collecting recyclable materials in large sacks, which can be sold for a small amount of money. Housing and food is provided for young Christian volunteers who will come and live and work with these children.

Ongoing Preparation at Mae Sariang:

The renovation work on the building to be used for the Bible School will be completed by the end of January. The teams of Karen Christians have worked so well and wonderfully transformed the place. News is rapidly traveling around the Karen villages and many seem interested. Within the next few months students will be enrolling and the school will open at the beginning of July.

Team Accommodation:

During one of our recent visits to Mae Sariang, while we were looking for accommodation for our team, we came across a nine bed-roomed house, like a mini hotel, that looked as though it hadn't been lived in for a very long time. Since the formation of Chrestos Mission, we have felt that the Lord wants us to live and to learn in a community. This place was another confirmation to us, but our

question was, “What would be the cost?” Well, to our surprise the owner came to see us in Chiang Mai and said that we could rent it for 8,000 baht [120 pounds] per month, and he would have it painted and polished for the team to move in by the beginning of May. He has a heart for the Karen and the work that we are doing.

Khmu Work:

We appreciate worshipping with our Khmu brothers and sisters on a Sunday afternoon in Chiang Mai, and also the times when we can go to the Border Seminars on the Thai/Lao border. We always come away strengthened and challenged by the faith of these dear ones who are willing to follow the Lord Jesus through much hardship and harassment, even to prison. Like Apostle Paul of old, *‘they consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to them’ Romans 8:18*

In the early part of December Geoffrey and Sionh Chan left for a Khmu conference in Nan province in a small village close to the Lao border. About seventy Khmu Christians, half of them young people, came to the conference. Only one Khmu Christian managed to cross the border from Laos, due to the tight border restrictions, and he arrived three days after the conference had started. His name, translated into English, is ‘Little Last’, indicating his position in the family. He is the son of a District Governor in Laos, but he grew up to be an addict and a thief, living with a notorious reputation, despised by everyone, and expelled from school at an early age. However, when he came to faith in Christ his life was so radically changed that everyone was amazed. He has also led his parents and wider family to faith in Christ. He regularly visits eight villages, where another hundred and forty have also believed. Several times he has been arrested and interrogated by the police and he asks them, “Do you want me to be the same as before?” They have no answer for such a question. His father has also been threatened, but stands firm.



Medical care is not free in Laos and many cannot afford treatment. Through Chrestos funds we seek to help our brothers and sisters in their need. We recently received a letter from a Lao pastor whose mother had been severely ill. At their local hospital they were told that she was too ill and would not accept her, so he sold all he could and raised enough money to take her to the major hospital in the capital, Vientiane, where she was treated in the intensive care unit. After a few days, his money

ran out and he was told that the next day he would have to take his mother home to die. That night he and his family agonized in prayer and then had a sense of peace that the Lord had answered. The next day, as he was about to take his mother home, a Lao pastor who had been at the Border Seminar came to him at the hospital and gave him the needed money. Not many days later, his mother recovered, and went home well. He was so grateful to the Lord and to those who had helped him through Chrestos. He returned to his village with renewed faith and zeal.

With our loving greetings, Geoffrey and Pat