

Chrestos Update 21: January 2008

‘Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.’ Isaiah 54:2

Sweet December Outreach

The Karen call December ‘Sweet December’, and love to celebrate the Saviour’s birth throughout the whole month, from the first of December to the first of January. Our students and some of the staff were divided into five groups to visit the villages in five areas. They spent an average of two to three days in each village, visiting each house to talk to the families, and in the evenings they had a Christmas program of singing, drama, testimonies and preaching. They also had week-night services and Sunday services. Even the villagers who are not Christians love these visits, since there is little other entertainment in the villages.



Several reports of Christians being encouraged in their faith, and others challenged to give their lives to Christ. Ten people wanted to be baptized.

A Busy Term Ahead!

This term, as well as the teaching program, we will also be involved in several other activities. These will be ‘The Ten Bible Schools’ Sports Tournament’; visits to Karen Refugee Camps for graduations and thanksgiving services; ‘The Thai Karen Baptist Inter Bible- School Conference’; and ‘The Multi Bible-School Singing Fellowship’. There is also a Women’s Conference 1- 5 Feb. here at the Chrestos Bible School, when Pat will be teaching on the Book of Esther. The local Karen leaders have also asked her to do Sunday School Teachers’ Training from March 3-6. She would greatly appreciate prayer for these teaching opportunities.

Completing the Course

This is the final year of full-time study for several of our students. By April 2008, we will have nine graduates completing the four-year course and two students completing the two- year course. Most, if not all, of the four-year graduates will join our staff. Their help will be invaluable as more young people come to study and as we see the work of Chrestos expanding further. The two-year graduates are older men who have already worked in their churches but wanted to come for further training. One of them, Tung Chai, will return to his evangelistic ministry and will help with recording the Karen Scriptures for distribution in the villages. The other man, Nehemiah, is pastor of the new church at Ma O Jo, started by one of our outreach teams two years ago. The church has been steadily growing, but now meeting some opposition from the many mediums in the area. Please pray for Nehemiah and the believers there. As we see from history and as we read in the Word of God, the kingdoms of this world are passing away and there is only one kingdom that will remain. Now, it is a ‘hidden kingdom’ but one day the glory of God’s kingdom will be revealed to all. In the light of this, we feel the urgency and the privilege of teaching and training men and women for service in that kingdom.

New Development

Unexpectedly, Chrestos has been given a legacy for the establishment of an orphanage in the Mae Sariang area. We are moving ahead with this in liaison with the local officials. Three of our graduates will be going for further training with the Social Services to help prepare them for this work. Watch this space!

Laos:

Pat was invited to be one of the speakers at the Khmu Women's Conference on the Lao/Thai border in December but was unable to go because of her visit to the UK. From all accounts, they had a wonderful time with several speakers and much opportunity for learning and sharing. Over a hundred women came, and these women are a challenge to us all as they seek to keep the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shining in their families and in their churches, in spite of persecution and some of their husbands in prison for their faith. We will be visiting Laos for a week during February.

Burma:

Many remain in prison and attacks on the ethnic minorities are escalating. The Burmese dictators are boasting that they will eliminate the Karen within the next five years.

Family News:

We are so grateful for our family scattered in different places, and we realize that distance only makes more precious the times that we can spend together. Pat has had the joy of being with the family in the UK during the Christmas period: Philip, Sarah, and Moses, Daniel, and Peter and Sandrine, who were recently engaged. Ruth, Michel, Arunie, and Ilona are still living in Chiang Mai and busy helping the Karen. The girls are both doing very well in home-school. Ouame and Tong Vieng are still working on their chicken-farm in Arkansas, while caring for the Lao Christians in that area. We do praise God that his kidney transplant has proved successful. His four children: Anna and her husband Jay, Stephen, John and Goh with their two sons, Caleb and Elijah, and Joseph with his girlfriend Kwan all continue their work and studies. Dorcas, Patrick, and Henry have also recently moved to Arkansas. Dorcas is working in emergency medicine, and Patrick is looking forward to working on the land with Henry as a good helper. We are so glad that they are near Ouame's family and the many relatives of Tong Vieng in that area.

We do hope to see many of you during our time in the UK, and want you to know how much your love, prayers and support mean to us, as together we seek to serve the Lord among the Karen and the Khmu.

May this coming year be one in which we all come to know more fully the King of kings and the Lord of lords and serve Him with increasing love and obedience.

With our love and sincere thanks to each one of you, Geoffrey and Pat

Chrestos Mission

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