

Chrestos Update 29: January 2010

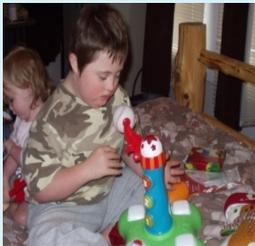
“Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:43-45

Together Time: It was such a joy to visit our families in the States. We stayed with our son Ouame, Thong Vieng, and their son Stephan for some of the time. Geoffrey preached at the Lao Church, where Ouame is the pastor. It was also great to see Patrick, Dorcas, Henry, and Esther again. They are very busy, but Dorcas managed to get some time off work to be with us, and we had some special times together. Both families live in Arkansas, only about two hours apart. Geoffrey also travelled to Dallas, Texas to see Thra Hsa Twel, who had been our assistant director in the Bible School. Then they returned together with Moo K’Baw, Shiny, and Joseph to meet the rest of our family. We celebrated Thanksgiving together with Thong Vieng’s many relatives.



Some pictures of our grandchildren.

Arunie and Ilona, the daughters of Michel and Ruth in Thailand.



Henry and Esther, the children of Patrick and Dorcas in the United States.



Moses and Anna, the children of Sarah and Philip in the United Kingdom.

Children to Children We have been thrilled to see the concern of children for children. Sometimes they are children in a family. Sometimes they are children in a school. We are so grateful to the children in the International Christian School in Hong Kong, who give so generously for the children in the refugee camp. Also, the children in St. Gregory’s School in Sudbury, UK, who write letters and send gifts and photos to children whom they have never met, but want to help. This all started with an eight year old girl, who visited us with her parents, and then shared the needs of the children with her classmates. Well done Alice! Pastor Arthur and Clasper his wife are now caring for nearly one hundred and fifty children.

Chrestos Outreach: During November and December our five teams of students; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and a team of staff members visited eighty villages in eight provinces of Thailand. They spent time with the villagers during the day, and in the evening set up stage and had a program with a concert, drama, sharing, and preaching, often from early evening until midnight. They were greatly appreciated in many places.

Karenni Camp: Eh Ler Tha and his wife Eh Wah led a team to the Star Orphanage, in the Karenni refugee camp, which Chrestos is now funding with gifts from Australia. They stayed there for two days, and had so much fun with the orphans and the staff. There are sixty-three orphans: thirty boys and thirty-three girls, and five staff working with them. The young people love to sing and play the guitar. The team found that they need 30,000 Baht to renovate their building, which has many holes in the roof, but, in spite of some hardship, these young people reach out to help their community. They work hard, and get good marks in their studies. Some of them are below.



Relief in the Refugee Camps: There are thirteen refugee camps on the Thai/Burmese border. The U.N. supply rice and oil. Chrestos supplies tins of fish, mainly to the children in some orphanages, to increase their protein intake. Last year we delivered twenty-five thousand tins of mackerel that were greatly appreciated.

Weddings: While undergraduates, we urge our students to concentrate on their studies, and leave matters of the heart to later! We also tell them that we love weddings, and once they have graduated we would love to celebrate with them. Well, they have taken us at our word, and from November to the middle of January we have had four weddings of our graduates. Wonderful!!

Into the Community We are building bridges to the Thai in Mae Sariang, mainly through English teaching. Last year Pat taught medical English to the staff in the Government Hospital, and this was received enthusiastically. The head of the English department at the largest secondary school in town is a very fine Thai Muslim lady, and she asked if we would check her teaching materials, as she wants them at the highest standard possible. We are happy to help her, and look forward to a growing friendship. The chief judge in town has become a dear friend of our Mission, and, at his request we give him English tuition. We have also given out quilts to the poor from our local village, and on Children's Day, toys to the children at the next door kindergarten. Good to get to know our neighbours!

Preparing Leadership; This year the training of our staff for future leadership in ministry is of the utmost importance, as the indigenization of the work continues. Joshua in the Old Testament and Timothy in the New Testament remind us that leaders must first be willing to learn. Twelve of our graduates are working with us and they would like us to remain here as long as possible, gradually giving over more responsibility as they are ready for it. They already organize the Outreach Program twice a year, plan for the many conferences we have, counsel with the students, liaise with officials, and work well in their daily duties.

Chrestos Bible School: The Bible School numbers are increasing each year. There is a good team of teachers, including nine of our own graduates and three other members of staff. We also have mainly

national Karen teachers coming to teach the Bible and other subjects, such as counseling, leadership, evangelism, pastoral care, and Christian Education.

The Planting of the Lord: When we came from Chiang Mai to Mae Sariang in 2003 to look for accommodation we found that, what we now call the Team House, had been empty for six years. At the back of the house were rows of small plastic bags containing earth, in which were placed saplings. We were reminded of the many Karen young people waiting to be planted in the Word of God, to become 'oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified' Isaiah 61:3. It is wonderful to see this happening.

The Studio Team is producing more sermons and songs on audio and video. They are in the early stages of preparing a video on The Lost Son.

Meeting with Khmu Leaders from Laos On February 22-25 we will travel to Nong Khai, a town on the Thai/Lao border, for a Board Meeting of the Khmu Christian Connection, followed by a time of teaching and fellowship with the Khmu leaders from Laos. They have asked us to prepare for this, and we feel honored to be able to help them in this way. They are servants who deeply love the Master. Please pray for them and for us.

Auction of the Hotel; Today, January 14, there was an auction for the semi-derelict hotel next to our property. As there were no other bidders they postponed the auction for another two weeks. We should have a definite answer on January 28, but the lack of interest suggests that the Lord will give it to us at a low price. This will enable us to have money left over for renovation. Praise the Lord!

The Diglot New Testament: Chrestos is partnering Scottsdale Baptist Church in The States to produce a diglot New Testament in Karen and English.

We are so grateful to our British and Thai Boards, and for the Chrestos Family here and in many other places. Thank you for your love, prayers and encouragement. We will be in the UK from April 24 – May 24. Geoffrey and Pat

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