

REFLECTIONS FROM BANGKOK

Learning through teaching

For these past two years on the field, I have been primarily a student. So much to learn: how to communicate (verbally and non-verbally), how to do everyday activities in very new ways, how to not offend my neighbors, how to reflect Jesus in this culture.

But I have been fumbling my way through a few ministry roles, mostly for my benefit, with anything God accomplishes through me a nice bonus. Initially, I began helping Permsup youth to discover Jesus in new ways through Scripture. I've been blessed to continue that Bible study although I've moved into a new community, and now one of our Thai leaders will take over for me while I'm in the States.

My most recent roles have been leading the message time for our house church of eager youth, and facilitating an inductive study through Mark with our adult house church leaders.

I have seen God move powerfully in both of these settings. He has convicted me through the passage about letting the children come to him, and about the call to learn from their faith. We must be like children to enter the Kingdom! Though I am praying for fruit among the adults in Phothong as well, I no longer see children's ministry as simply a means to that end (see my blog for more on this).

Leading the Mark study has really been a joy, seeing these leaders, most slum-dwellers themselves, pursue Jesus and dig into the Word. They truly long for God's promises in their difficult life circumstances, and his call on their lives as they reach out to their slums. They are an encouragement to me as I seek to persevere here alongside them.

I praise God for all he has blessed me with through my Thai friends and neighbors.



Please pray for:

- **My preparations for furlough, particularly for good closure with my slum community and other relationships here**
- **My housemate and house church co-leader Nim, who is going through personal trials that are making it difficult for her to invest in the community.**
- **A sense of peace as I leave my ministry roles for my five-month furlough. Pray especially that I would be able to place the Phothong house church in God's hands for this time.**

that trust built that weekend has been spilling over into other relationships as they share about our trip. Pray that God would bring lasting fruit from these friendships.

Bonding with neighbors in Lampang

Last month I had the opportunity to join a few families from Phothong on a trip up north. Christian Children's Fund (which is NOT Christian, at least not the version here in Thailand) is very active in my community, and once a year they take all the local leaders on a vacation. They invited me to come along.



Some of my neighbors in Lampang

It was a fun time of just sharing life with these families. They were particularly excited that I could eat the spiciest of Northern Thai food, and enjoyed my attempts to dance along with them during a celebration we attended the second day.

It was really nice to get out of the city and into nature. Our first day we went out on a restaurant/boat onto a giant lake, and it seemed we were the only people around for miles. The second day was a trip to a local temple, complete with a festive procession into the temple, meditation to monk chanting, and a meal afterwards. I refrained from participating, but sat and prayed. I had the sense that God is so jealous for the Thais' worship, for these spiritually hungry ones to turn to him and be filled by him.

Since the trip, I have felt a greater closeness with these families and have noticed

Preparing for home assignment

I am two years into my five-year commitment, which means it is time for my home assignment. This is a 4-6 month time in the States, for the purposes of resting, reflecting, visiting churches and donors, and possible training or education to be better equipped for my next term on the field.

I am entering this time with a mix of feelings. I am excited to see people I have missed, to return to my heart culture, to share with supporters how their prayers and resources have made Kingdom impacts.

On the other hand, Bangkok feels like home, now, too. Leaving for five months will be difficult, and I am expecting some homesick-

ness even while in the States. I'm sure I will also experience a good deal of reverse culture shock.

Please pray for this time. I will be presenting in at least three churches, traveling to Boston, California, North Carolina, and various places in the Northwest to visit friends and family, and will also be attending the Urbana Missions Conference in St. Louis this year.



Here is a tentative schedule of where I will be and when. If you would like to meet up with me, please drop me a line!

Dec. 5—27: McMinnville, OR

Dec. 27—31: St. Louis (Urbana Conference)

Jan. 1—16: Boston

Jan. 16—31: McMinnville

Feb. 1—late March: Pomona, CA

Late March—early April: Tijuana, Mexico (house-building mission with my home church)

April—mid-May: McMinnville, with trips to Seattle, WA and Eugene, OR

Please pray for:

- **The Permsup community where Dave lives, which will be evicted in the next few months. Pray for successful relocation of the vibrant house church that meets there.**
- **Our team's recruiting efforts at the Urbana Missions Conference, and that our business plan would be granted an award in the Business as Mission competition.**

Budget and fundraising update

God has been good, and you all have been generous, so that my support level has actually increased while on the field! Missionaries almost across the board tend to lose support rather than gain. I have really appreciated not needing to worry about my finances while I have been here. Thank you!

My budget is fully met through furlough, with the exception of one new expense. I am hoping to join my home church on their **house-building mission to Mexico** this coming April. This will primarily be a time for me to connect with the many youth who will go and share my experience as a missionary. I am praying some of them will catch the vision to do this kind of work long-term. **The price for this trip is \$550.** Any donations to help with this expense would be greatly appreciated.

Also, I have done some calculations taking into account the recent weakening of the US dollar in Thailand, as well as my average medical expenses here, increased oil prices and general cost of living. Based on these new numbers and my current support level, **I am praying for an additional \$80/month, or \$960/year.**

If you would like to help me meet my new budget through monthly or annual donations, please use the enclosed envelope, or visit my website to learn about other donation methods. If you would like further details about my budget, please contact me and I'd be happy to share that with you.

COMING UP:

- Furlough (home assignment), December 10, 2006—May 15, 2007
- Urbana Missions Conference, December 27—January 31.

I have a new website!

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