

Chrestos Mission Update 13: June 2006

‘O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth’. Psalm 8:9

Dear Chrestos Family,

We would like to share with you some of the things that have been happening since our return to Thailand, but before we do that, we would like to thank each one of you in the UK who made us so welcome and provided for us in so many ways. We feel humbled by your love & care.

Bible Learning Conference: Soon after our return, we heard from the Karen leaders in Mae Sariang that a ‘Bible Learning Conference’ has been organised by the leaders of the Thai Karen Baptists with well-known Karen Bible teachers coming from Burma. This would be a whole country venture with five day conferences held in different parts of the country. The first would be in Mae Sariang and the Karen leaders asked if we could host the conference on our new property, for pastors from the local area. We were pleased to have this opportunity as we want to see this property used to the full. Our staff and students all served well during that time [June 11-16] and we felt that they also benefited greatly from this close contact with these experienced men of God.

The Edge of Eternity

A few days after arriving back in Mae Sariang, two of our Bible School students and the contractor working on our buildings travelled to Chiang Mai to buy floor tiles for the dormitories. On their return journey in a heavy downpour of rain, the lorry skidded and turned over, very near to a steep drop on the roadside. We are so thankful to God that no one was seriously hurt and only had minor injuries. Friends in a nearby village came to help. After collecting up all the broken tiles and saving what we could, we came together to give thanks to God. We were reminded again that we all live on the edge of eternity.



More Rice Needed:

We have been able to supply sixty-six more sacks of rice, and Christians from other villages have given another ten, for the village on the Thai/Burmese border where the bamboo-rats ate the rice-crop. A team of four of our students will be taking the rice to this remote mountain area, about four hours walk from the nearest vehicle track, in the next week or so.

Fish Supplies: We have identified more needy groups of orphans in the refugee camps who are lacking in protein, so Chrestos is now supplying tins of sardines to six refugee camps, a migrant school and several children’s hostels. Some of these are in distant, difficult-to-reach places, so we have decided to deliver the fish to them every six months instead of monthly: a total of 40,000 tins per year. We have been able to increase the number because of the generosity of our donors and their desire to help those in need. As we write this letter, three of our team are delivering supplies to camps and a migrant school in Mae Sot, a town on the Thai/Burma border.

Exciting Developments at Ma Oh Jo:

This cluster of five villages was one of our outreach areas in December 2005. The area has a reputation for drugs and other related problems. Some showed interest and Geoffrey, with a team of students, has visited there monthly. Three of our men students have been stationed there during the month of May and reported on our return that about ten families are building a church. Chrestos has bought the land very cheaply and paid for the roofing, and they are doing the rest. Some professed conversion several years ago but had not continued to practice their faith. During his last visit, Geoffrey was thrilled to find one of our students, reticent to come to the Bible School a year ago, is now working there with fervour.

Recording Studio: The recording-studio is progressing well and we are so grateful for the financial provision for this. One of our Karen Team, leading this work, has been receiving professional training in Bangkok from those working with the Far Eastern Broadcasting Company, who are willing to continue to share their expertise with us. We are all very excited about being able to record in words and song the wonderful message of salvation to take to many Karen villages.

Thanksgiving & Dedication: The buildings on the 'Promised Land' are going up rapidly, and on July 2 there will be a Thanksgiving and Dedication Service in the warehouse that has now received a face-lift and become the auditorium! This holds about 300/400 people and we are so grateful for the chairs that have been provided for this from a designated gift. Following that service will be the Graduation and Commissioning Service of four of our lady students who have completed two years of study and will be helping in different ministries with the women and children in the village churches.

Starting Studies Soon: The July term will start with a Karen teacher teaching on evangelism for two weeks. Eleven new students have already arrived to study Karen literacy before the term starts. Others have been accepted and from past experience we find that there are often other late applicants. We expect the total number of students for this coming year to be round about forty.

The Karen Evangelist – 'First Light'

A few days ago, while we were in Chiang Mai we heard from one of our Karen Team about a young Karen evangelist who was very ill in a hospital in Chiang Mai. The hospital said they could do no more for him, so we brought him back to Mae Sariang. He was very wasted and could not eat, with some obstruction in the bowel, but we have been thrilled to see that in answer to prayer he is improving rapidly. His intestinal obstruction appears to be relieved and he is now eating well. We had a time of thanksgiving to God this morning and continue to pray for our dear brother 'First Light'.

Prayer for Pastor in Laos

We would like to ask special prayer for Y a Khmu pastor in prison in Laos. He is very unwell with kidney problems and limited strength. An appeal on medical grounds was made for his release, but this was turned down. In eleven months time, he will have completed two-thirds of his sentence and another request will be made for him. He needs to be released soon to regain back his health and energy. Please pray with us for hard hearts to be softened and for this to happen. Thank you so much.

Please pray for Geoffrey's visit to Toronto, Canada [July22-Aug 13] where he will be speaking at a Chinese Bible Conference on the subject of time.

During these past few days Thailand has been celebrating the 60 year reign of their beloved king. We too hold in deep respect this earthly king who has done so much for his people, but how much more our eternal king, the Lord Jesus Christ, our beloved King of kings, who has given His life for all the people.

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

P.O. Box 48, Mae Sariang, Mae Hongson, Thailand 58110
Phone no. 66 53 683 176 email: geoffrey.atkinson@gmail.com