

## **CHRESTOS UPDATE 25: February 2009**

*Blessed is the man or woman who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. Psalm 112:1*

### **Family News**

We had a wonderful time in the United States with our family there: Dorcas and Patrick, with Henry and little Esther, and also with our son Ouame and his wife Tong Vieng, with their four children and two grandchildren. We met more of Tong Vieng's relatives, when we celebrated Thanksgiving together. Both families now live in Arkansas.

While we were in the United States, Anna was born to Philip and Sarah in Oxford and we will meet her for the first time in a day or two when we go to Chiang Mai. They are staying for some days there with Ruth, Michel, Arunie and Ilona and then will travel back with us to Mae Sariang.

### **Bible College**

The Bible School students had a very exciting month of outreach during December, or as the Karen call it 'Sweet December', a whole month to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We are now nearly at the end of January, with just two months to the end of our study periods, and then the month of April with several conferences.

Two of our staff and their families have moved on to other areas of service and we are so grateful for the new members of staff that have joined us. Saw Htaw and Kelly Htoo have come to serve with us. Saw Htaw is originally from Burma, and went to study in the United States and later married Kelly. They now have a young son Jeremiah, and are looking forward to another baby joining the family in the month of May. Saw Htaw is a graduate in IT.

We also have three more Karen joining us on the staff. Thara Mu Eh Htoo Hai is a woman with much experience, having worked in another Bible School for ten years in the past. She is helping with the teaching, particularly in the field of Christian Education: teaching and training our students in the most effective way to work with children. Her husband will also be coming in to help our young men know more about the work of a Karen pastor. We have also a very gifted couple, who will get married on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Thara Eh Lo Tha is helping in the music training of the students. Thara Mu Eh Wa, his wife-to-be, is a trained teacher helping with our children's work and teaching an English class for some of the students. She also helps with translation where necessary, and will be answering the requests for our audio and visual recordings, that are mainly from Karen in other countries. Both Thara Eh Lo Tha and Thara Mu Eh Wa have beautiful voices, and would like to continue their singing ministry under Chrestos.

It is also very rewarding to see our first graduates taking up responsibility in managing the Bible School, and liaising with Thai officials, helping to care for the students, working with the children in the Home of Peace and Joy, and editing, recording, and preparing literature in the media office. We have also started on our Graduate Teaching Scheme. Several of our graduates are studying some of the shorter books in depth, and will teach them in the next year or so. This training is important. Some of the countries around us do not have the freedom that Thailand enjoys now, but we do not know how long it will last. Our young people must prepare for serving in the days ahead, whatever the pressures on them may be.

In the final weekend of January we will be receiving teachers and students from our sister Bible School in Chiang Mai. They will be with us for two days, and during that time friendships between the students and staff will be strengthened. This will be a blessing to the Karen Church in the days ahead.

## Home of Peace and Joy



The boys at the Home of Peace and Joy continue to grow and develop in their schoolwork and relationships, under the loving care and teaching of the staff

The feedback from the Thai School is that they are exceptionally well-behaved and hardworking students.

### Recording Studio:

In our recording studio, we continue to produce CD's of sermons, hymns, and Bible recordings in Karen, both for Thailand, and to send to many other places. We are also completing the dubbing of the film 'Matthew' into Karen. This will be available on a worldwide basis on DVD.



**Ma O Jo:** During January we visited the church at Ma O Jo in the mountains, where one of our graduates, Nehemiah, is pastor. Four new Christians were baptized, followed by a Communion Service.



**News from Laos:** The following report will give you some idea of the needs of our brothers and sisters in Laos. Please pray. In September of last year, the chief of a village in a southern province called a special meeting to resolve the "problem" of eight resident Christian families who had refused to give up their faith. The meeting concluded with plans to expel all fifty-five Christians from the village. Although all adult members of a village are usually invited to such meetings, on this occasion the Christians were deliberately excluded. Pastor S and two other believers from the village, C and K, were held in the nearby district police detention cell. It was earlier reported that police had held the men in handcuffs and wooden foot stocks since their arrest, causing numbness and infection in their legs and feet, due to lack of blood circulation. Authorities said they would only release the three if they renounced their faith.

We are so grateful to each one of you for your love, prayers, and interest in the work here.

With our loving greetings, Geoffrey and Pat [geoffrey.atkinson@gmail.com](mailto:geoffrey.atkinson@gmail.com)

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