

Prayer Letter

April 2009

Sawadee!

Last weekend, as Christians worldwide remembered the wonderful events of Easter, people in Thailand were busy celebrating their traditional New Year, known as the Songkran festival. This is the famous (or rather infamous!) water-throwing festival. Sadly, this year the political chaos and violence in Bangkok has dominated the headlines, eclipsing the original meaning of Songkran. It is usually a happy time for families to gather together, to show respect to the older family members, who in turn offer a blessing to the younger ones. We must be getting old because two local students came to us today with fruit and sweets and asked for us to pray for them, before they poured water over our hands!

Sahamit School

We had a busy last term at school, with the usual teaching plus a Bible camp, several sports' days, a special Scout camp and the end of year exams. In March, 70 students graduated from Sahamit School, of whom about 20 are going on to university education, and the others will mainly be finding work. A few have already got married!



Sports day at Sahamit School

District meetings

The Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) Youth Committee, who we will be working more closely with in Chiang Mai, were keen to visit as many district church meetings as possible. Pete was able to join them, and to preach, at the large Chiang Rai, Mae La Noi, Mae Hong Son, and Zion (Mae Chaem) meetings. If you can check a map of



Dinner at the Zion district meeting



northern Thailand you will see that they covered a lot of ground!

The AGM

The KBC annual general meeting was an extra special event this year. We travelled as a family to (swelteringly hot!) Mae Sariang for the four-day gathering of at least 2,000 Karen Christians. Each year we are encouraged by the increasing number of familiar faces we see! The Sahamit School choir were chosen to represent Musikee district, and they sang five songs in various meetings. Two of these were songs that Lizz had taught them, in English, in four part harmony and she was very proud of their efforts!

Our good friend, Jacqui Wells, will be retiring in May. She is a BMS mission worker who has been in Thailand for over 20 years working with the Karen women. At the AGM the Karen publicly thanked Jacqui for all her hard work and dedication. We will really miss her (especially her great hospitality and her words of wisdom!) although we certainly won't forget her, not least because we will be moving into her home at the Siloam Karen Bible School in June! Please pray for her as she prepares to leave her friends, work, church and home in Chiang Mai.

God's looking after us!

Before going to the AGM we had a weekend in Chiang Mai to do jobs like having the car serviced and collecting

our post. Abi and Jacob were able to have some overdue vaccinations. We also had the tyres on our car changed and it turned out that the wheel bearings had worn through on one wheel. This took several hours to replace and we set off later than planned to travel to Mae Sariang. However, on the journey back from the AGM to our village we were very pleased that the work had been completed on the car. We gave a lift home to seven students who had sung in the choir. In order to avoid the heavy Songkran traffic on the main roads (and to cut several hundred kilometers from the journey) we followed the headmaster's car on a short-cut unmade road through the mountains. The road doesn't appear on any maps and Lizz was not convinced that anyone in the group really knew where we were! The four-wheel drive was essential on several very steep sections and we were glad that we only passed one vehicle coming the other way – at a section where it was possible (just!) to pass without falling off the cliff-side! We don't take our health and safety for granted. Thank God for looking after us on many journeys like these!

Chaem Noi youth camp

About 70 young people from a mixture of Christian and Buddhist families joined in this Songkran camp in a nearby village. The teaching was based on Ephesians 6: 2 "Honour your father and mother..." and it was a privilege to help lead some interactive sessions with the teenage group. Abigail and Jacob had great fun joining in the singing and playing with balloons with the younger kids!



Chaem Noi youth camp

Moving on

We are aware that our time in Musikee is drawing to a close. Please pray that we would make the most of every opportunity in these last few weeks to share Jesus' love with our neighbours here. It will be hard for the children and us to say many goodbyes and to pack up our home. While we are glad that we will be able to visit Musikee from Chiang Mai, it will never be quite the same as being a part of this lovely village community. Praise God for all that we have learnt by living here. We're looking forward to sharing more with you during our home assignment in July – November this year.

Praise God for:

- ◆ Jacqui Wells' faithful service to the Karen Church
- ◆ God's love, protection and guidance of our family
- ◆ All those we've come to know and love in back-of-beyond Musikee!

Please pray for:

- ◆ A peaceful resolution to Thailand's political crisis
- ◆ The 70 graduating Sahamit students who are making their way in the big wide world of work and further education
- ◆ Our upcoming move to Chiang Mai and preparation for home assignment in the UK

*With our love and prayers,
Lizz, Pete, Abigail and Jacob*

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