

# Ashleigh Gibb

Prayer letter, November 2017

[bmsworldmission.org/agibb](http://bmsworldmission.org/agibb)



As I write you this prayer letter, it's now 10 months to date from when I started the course of my new life. I've never known time to go by so quickly as it does in Bangkok. The pace of life here certainly does not match up with the Thai "sabaay sabaay" lifestyle that people here are so accustomed to. Although time has shot by so very quickly it also feels as if I have been living in Asia for a lot longer. Home is where the heart is and my heart was lost to Thailand the second my plane touched down in Bangkok airport. This is not say that that there have not been some bumps and heart aches along the way. There most certainly have and I know for sure there will be many more. England will always be my home. However, it now shares a little spot in my heart with the vibrant new culture that I have so immersed myself in.

When you embark on the adventure that God has for you, he does not only promise that lives will be changed but he also promises that our lives will be changed. Before taking my chances overseas I could only imagine just what he had in store for me but of course it comes back to that classic Bible verse that we read in Ephesians 3 vs 4: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" I can absolutely testify to this truth. I never imagined in a million years the things that God would do in me and through me whilst in Thailand. I am able to look at myself in the mirror for the first time and love the woman that God created. Sure, I have a long way to go until I am where I need to be but I have embraced this journey and am willing to run it with the strength of the king that stands beside me.

It's been 3 months since I began my work in Citylight Coffee shop. This is a Coffeeshop that has been set up by Nightlight and it is located right in the centre of one of Bangkok's most notorious Red-light districts. Not only are we a safe haven for people on the streets of Nana district to come; we also provide employment for women who have come out of prostitution.

The first day I was due to start at the Coffee shop I was a bag of nerves. Sure, I had studied 6 months of full time Thai language but it was nowhere close to being amazing. Those old silly thoughts of inadequacy and

questions of my calling began to arise and of course those childhood fears of "What if they don't like me??" As always, I had nothing to fear. The women I now work with in this shop are some of the most beautiful, driven and compassionate women I have ever met. When I look at a woman who has a story of horror in her past I do not look and see a victim, I look and see a princess with the strength of a warrior. Building relationships with the girls has been a privilege and a joy, I cannot wait for each day that I get to spend time with them. I have been talking to them recently about their dreams and what their heart most yearns for in the future. One woman is studying beauty in her free time and wishes to open her own beauty salon, another dream is to open a shop selling her own cakes and cookies. I genuinely mean this when I say that they have more than just potential to seek after these dreams. We are currently in the process of trying to get the girls onto a business course in order to give them the skills they need for the future.

Not only this, over the past month we have set up English classes for all to come. Twice a week we teach both women on the street and women who have already come to Nightlight. My friend Rachel and I are teaching these classes alongside two teachers from an international school. The women have such a willingness to learn, the classes are filled with such laughter, they are now asking me to translate in Thai for them. Oh, how the tables have turned! The ability to speak English can be incredibly helpful for these women who wish to take careers further, even for the girls in the coffee shop it is so very important as most of our customers are foreigners and customers of the Red-light district. Being able to communicate is important.

I will say that the environment in the coffee shop can be a little tough at times. The heaviness of the area cannot and should not go unnoticed, we are working in a dark area and we come across some very intense situations especially when it comes to helping women on the street. Male customers can be violent towards women in prostitution and there have been many instances of this that I have seen and have had to deal with. The beautiful thing to come out of this is that women feel they can come to us as a safe place, we promise to help as much as

we are able and we most of all promise to love and love with all our heart, no holding back.

Since being in the Coffee Shop I have set up "Live Music Fridays" On this evening, we open our double doors onto the streets of the Red-light and have some excellent talent play music to the customers. This is a real time of joy and our little coffee shop transforms. We have teams and individuals that give up their time to come and play for us. They play a mix of their own songs, popular songs and worship music and the customers love to hear it! I genuinely believe that our coffee shop is such a light, it is a great opportunity for outreach as women bring their customers into our environment, many have commented on the difference of the atmosphere compared to out on the street. I believe that music brings beauty into dark places.

My heart and mind is split between the Coffee shop and the other women that we reach out to regularly in the Red-light area. I am continuing with bar, street and brothel outreaches. With ever more increasing trafficking taking place in Uganda, we are assisting more women than ever. Eventually I have the desire to step in to the role of a case manager for these victims of trafficking. Something that we are trying to do more of as an organisation is getting into the homes of these women and spending time with them, be that just conversation or Bible studies, we want to love them in the best way we can. I think this is a very beautiful way of really getting to the core of these women's hearts and meeting them where they are at. A lot of the African women have come from Christian backgrounds and are so keen to reconnect with God through all the trauma and heart ache.

As you can see, lots of things are taking place at the moment. The ministry is in a time of transition with some staff leaving and new ones being taken on board. Please pray for a strength within Nightlight that we would be able to love and support each other through the tough times, of those there are many. In order to be able to reach out to woman and bring glory to God it is of absolute necessity that we are of sound mind. We need to be strong within both our hearts and our mind and that requires much support and opportunities to process. I am incredibly lucky that I have the support and love of BMS,

their pastoral care during the short time already overseas has been beyond brilliant, I am forever grateful.

I will finish with saying that the things God is doing continue to surprise me each and every day. He is challenging and changing me in ways that are sometimes painful and yet beautiful. I am not the same girl that left the UK 10 months ago. God has sent me to Thailand to work with what I would describe as women of true strength and it is changing me. My identity is well and truly hidden in Christ and nothing or nobody has ever made me happier, his presence and encouragement in my life is so sweet, I wouldn't trade that for the world. God has instilled such vision in my heart. I have never been so excited to see him carry out his plans for my life.

### Prayer points

- The transition that Nightlight is currently going through in terms of staffing. Pray that the Lord would open doors for people coming in. Pray also that the team would continue to love and support each other
- Pray for the women I work with in the coffee shop. Pray that I would know the best way to support and love them through their time here and that their dreams would be fulfilled
- Please pray over the atmosphere of the Coffee shop. It is such a light in this neighbourhood. Pray that we will keep strong against the darkness that we encounter everyday
- One of my Thai friend's is struggling at the moment with the heaviness of the work, pray for breakthrough and that she will keep strong in her work with God and listen to his vision for her life.
- Every day I need to check in with myself and check that I have put healthy boundaries in place with work life balance and keeping both my spiritual and psychological health strong. Pray that I would seek my rest from God and know when it is time to say no to myself.

**Ashleigh**

If you would like to support Ashleigh by prayer and committed regular giving, visit [bmsworldmission.org/partners](https://bmsworldmission.org/partners) or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



**BMS**  
24:7 partners  
Turning compassion into action



PO Box 49 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8XA Tel: 01235 517700  
mail@bmsworldmission.org bmsworldmission.org

The Baptist Missionary Society: registered in England and Wales as a charity (number 1174364) and a company limited by guarantee (number 10849689)