

Kathryn Smith

Prayer letter, February 2018

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Dear friends,

I am writing this prayer letter after my third move within a year. I am now in my final destination of Chiang Mai, which is a city in the north of Thailand and where the projects I will be working on are based. I was in Bangkok for a total of 7 months attending the language school. Even though I found Bangkok rather overwhelming to begin with I was really enjoying my time there by the end of the 7 months and it was sad to be moving on from friendships that had developed. However, Chiang Mai is only an hour flight away from Bangkok so it will be easy to head back down and see them.

Life in Chiang Mai

I moved to Chiang Mai at the beginning of December. It is a much smaller city than Bangkok and has a much more laid back feel to it or as the Thais would say 'sabaay sabaay' (which means pleasant in Thai). The city is surrounded by mountains and it is lovely going around the Chiang Mai with this stunning back drop. The city centre has a moated old quarter, which has retained many of the traditional wooden houses and temples and that is where most of the tourists flock to when visiting. I live towards the edge of the city, which is closer to my projects and in a much more modern Thai neighbourhood.

On a previous visit to Chiang Mai in October last year I was able to find a house to rent, which meant I could move in as soon as I arrived in Chiang Mai. The house did not have much in the way of furniture so the first few weeks were busy buying furniture from the local furniture stores. Having the items delivered was interesting as the road my house is on is not named so I had to give directions in Thai so they could find my place. But everything turned up so I must have given the correct directions. The house is beginning to feel like home and I am feeling settled here.

I have been visiting churches to start attending. Despite Thailand having a tiny percentage of Christians there are a lot of churches in Chiang Mai, both Thai and International. I will attend a Church of Christ in

Thailand Church (CCT), since one of my projects I will be working in is run by CCT. But it is good to know that there are English speaking churches I can go to on the odd Sunday.

Christmas

The Christmas of 2017 was my first Christmas in Thailand and my first ever Christmas away from the UK, family and friends. So, I was quite nervous about how the festive period would feel but excited to be experiencing it in another country.

Since Thailand is a Buddhist country Christmas is not really celebrated. It is not a public holiday and therefore most Thai's are still working. When I asked a friend from church if there would be a Christmas day service she said there wouldn't be one as no one would be able to come as they will be working. They celebrated it on the Sunday service closest to Christmas.

Hope Home had a Christmas party which I attended. The children in the home performed a nativity play and sang a Christmas song, then we had a meal together. Other people who are connected with or volunteer at Hope Home attended the party. It was really lovely to meet those who I could be working alongside in the future.





I celebrated Christmas back in Bangkok as I had been invited to a wedding in the city a few days before. I spent the day with other mission workers as most Thai's were still working. We spent the day eating, playing games and watching Christmas films, so not far off from what my Christmas days were like in the UK. There were moments when the day was hard and I missed not sharing it with my family but I could take comfort that the people I was sharing the day with were feeling the same as me. Also, thanks to modern technology I was able to Skype my family in the evening. I am so grateful to God that I can easily keep in touch with family and friends this way.

Language Learning

I am continuing with my language learning at present and I am going to a personal tutor 3 afternoons a week. I have now moved on to learning how to read and write the Thai script. It is a very complex script that has 44 letters and many rules to learn, I am very tired at the end of each lesson. Even though I miss the social side of being with others in a classroom I am very grateful to have a personal tutor who is very patient with me and goes at my pace. I will be focusing on language learning for a few more months still, as BMS allow their long-term mission workers up to a year in language training. I hope in the spring time to start attending the projects a couple of times a week.

Prayer Points

Thank you so much for your ongoing support and prayers for me. Please could you continue to pray that:

- I will settle into Chiang Mai and it will feel like home
- Friendships will develop and I can build a community around me
- For my language learning and plenty of opportunities to practice my Thai

Kathryn

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



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