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A NEWSLETTER OF LIGHTBEARERS MINISTRIES | APRIL 2010

inside:

- > Facebook Wall Posts from Thai Staff, *p. 5*
- > Setting Toilets, Serving Pastors., *p. 6*



Sowing Seeds In Their Hearts, and Ours

— Andrew Brill, *Director of Discipleship*

Lightbearers has always sought to connect people and finances with Great Commission work in the 10/40 window. So we look for opportunities that allow the students in our yearlong discipleship program to serve overseas and be introduced to the work the Lord is doing through His body. We hope this experience is useful to God's long-term work overseas, while greatly impacting the students themselves.

In keeping with this approach, a team of eight Lightbearers students and volunteers traveled to Thailand over the Christmas break. At the request of a Lightbearers partner, these eight people

shared the Gospel on a college campus, spent time ministering to children in poor urban and rural areas, and encouraged the long-term workers by laboring with them and praying for them.

For this newsletter, I asked each of them to share from their experiences on the trip. Rather than focusing on the work they did, however, I asked that they describe how they sensed the Lord at work molding their hearts and their minds. In our experience, after all, the two happen simultaneously — we set out to take part in His work, often not realizing that all the while, He is at work molding us more into the image of Christ. >>

In Mark 4, Jesus tells a parable about human hearts by drawing a distinction between the ways four different types of soil affect the seed planted there. Two effects in particular stand out to me. One soil produces a plant that springs up “immediately” but then withers away. The good soil, however, produces a plant that bears fruit in abundance.

Fruit is a funny thing. You cannot force fruit to grow. You can only predict the generalities of what it will look like, not the specifics. And you have to wait for it.

It’s a good lesson for us at Lightbearers. We often want the instant gratification of seeing students’ lives change right before our eyes. Of course, it doesn’t work that way. Life change can happen in a moment, but the proof comes through months, years,

even a lifetime of fruit-bearing. Our role at Lightbearers is simply to help students put down roots and then put them in situations where we (or others) can sow seeds in their hearts. As Paul wrote, “I planted ... but God caused the growth.” (1 Corinthians 3:6) Ultimately, that was the purpose of the Thailand trip. After a semester of root growth, we wanted to till the soil of their hearts and then trust the Lord to bear fruit in their lives.

Two months after we returned from the trip — after some or all of the emotional high of the trip had worn off — I went back to the students and asked these questions: “How are you different? What fruit did this trip bear in your life?” Here are some of the responses.

— Andrew



Bryan Claypool

Discipleship has been on my heart for a long time, and I feel what I carried away from this trip was a reminder to keep taking the time to build relationships and to invest in others. Not to get so caught up in work or just the day-to-day things that keep us so busy, but to remember that we are here to bring God glory and “make disciples of all nations.”

Adam Burch

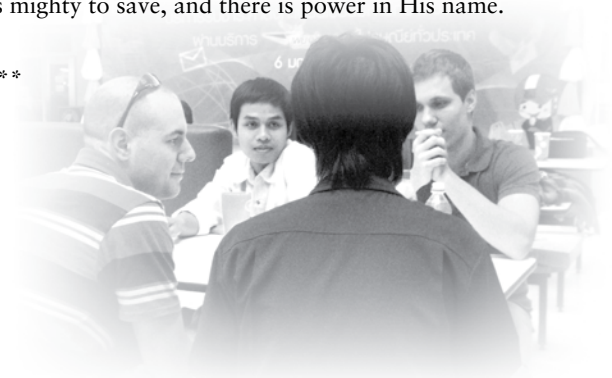
Before the trip, I had been going through a struggle of trying to build a Christian life based off the biblical view of a Christian and the worldly view of a life. What Scripture says is very true: You can’t serve both God and money, and that is exactly what I was doing by trying to model both the world and the Bible. Since the trip, I have begun, with God’s grace and peace, to deny myself the world’s approval and the world’s model for life, while modeling my life both as a biblical Christian and with a biblical view of what a Christian’s life is supposed to look like.

Jeremy Arent

Not only was the language barrier a challenge, most had never heard of a beginning, of creation, and couldn’t grasp the concept of a living God. I was so overwhelmed. How could I find the words to speak; the words to guide these people to salvation? That was when God humbled me.

The morning we were to go and preach to the students at KKU, God opened my eyes. I saw the Thai staff, most of whom were new believers, and how they would just go. Go out and share the news of Jesus Christ.

Instead of relying on God, I tried to rely on myself. I had been so foolish to think that how I presented the Gospel, that the words I used, was what would bring these people to salvation. God told me to go out in faith, and He would take care of the rest. So that’s what I did. I just went. And God did as He promised. Our God is mighty to save, and there is power in His name.



Lauren Cushing

On a small level, I enjoy now telling others about the 10/40 window more specifically, and I love sharing about unreached people groups and Thailand in particular. On a more practical level, I have made a goal to stay in contact with (and specifically encourage) a Thai Staff member once each week, as well as stay in contact with at least one friend who is not a believer each week.

My burden and boldness for the lost should not change just because I am now in America. In regards to encouraging the staff, I have had the humbling and blessed opportunity to financially support some of these new friends. Finally, on a bigger scale, though long-term and seemingly vague now, I am praying periodically for wisdom for the future, if my fiancé and I are to ever pursue missions. I pray that the Lord will give us wisdom regarding when and where, and that He would unite our hearts in that decision.

Sarah Phillips

So my life looks a little different after arriving back in the USA. I realized on my trip to Thailand the power of prayer. The Thai people were always praying, whether it was mealtime, someone else was sharing the gospel or just about anything else. I took that back with me, and now I am praying more often than ever. I am also trying to pray for 20 minutes a day for certain topics, like praising and thanking God and the nations.


Rachel Wankum

The Thai staff taught me to be bold with my faith. They have seen so much more persecution than I will ever see in my life, yet they are more on fire for God than I see in my own life. Since returning to America, I have tried to live this out in my walk with God. I was paired with one of the staff members, and she would boldly approach a new student ... sharing her testimony. What a challenge and an inspiration she presented me with!!



Abbi Mattox { *Journal Entry* }

December 31, 2009 / Northern Thailand



Today was an amazing day ... for the most part! We woke up and had fresh fruit and toast for breakfast! PRAISE THE LORD! Then we went to city streets to visit a market and do some shopping. We went around asking people what Christmas meant to them, and they couldn't really give us a clear answer. I don't know if it was because they couldn't understand us or if they really just did not know. They kept pointing us to gift boxes and the gift-wrapping section of the store. Maybe they think Christmas is about presents ... hummm, so do most Americans, crazy! The market was very wet, hot and smelly! Very interesting, nonetheless. We then went to the Emerald Buddhist Temple. Many, many people flocked to this place. To pray and worship their god, Buddha. We got the chance to actually go into the temple and see many faces to the ground praying and worshipping, and sadness struck me because how lonely these people must be, praying to a god that is not real. That won't hear their prayers and who will never love them like they love him. If only they knew about the one true God!

It is very hot in Thailand ... SO God brought rain today ... it was miserable for me at the time (clothes soaked, hair disgusting), but then it was refreshing. Isn't that the way life is? We seem to think we are miserable when God allows something to happen for us, in our favor then later when we can reflect we see how absolutely wonderful it was?!

A comment on the Lightbearers team from a partner team leader

I am thankful God for your coming. This is our blessing from God. The students are excited when you came. They are enthusiastic to be witness with you. There are the students came to Christ, and then lead them to join us.

We got a lot encouragement through your team. They help us clean office also. They are so humble to serve the other. You are enthusiastic to make relationship with the student so now we have many student to contact with. Everything was good because you was obey to do follow us.

We are so proud to work with you and hope that you will come again.

Love in Christ,
KAI

Rona Babb { *Journal Entry* }


Friday, January 8, 2010 / en route to the U.S.

I think God wants us to battle with tough things. I don't think He wants us to accept everything about Him and Christianity blindly. To just memorize and spit our formulas that don't go any deeper than that. I don't think that this is faith. I think He gave us these brains, as measly as they are compared to His surpassing greatness and knowledge, and He told us to love Him with all of our hearts, strength and mind. And so, I'm going to love God and pursue Him with my mind, regardless of the fact that I'm just never going to grasp many things...

But God, who loves so greatly, I had to ask, how is it that you created and love these Thais so much, yet they were placed in dire poverty and in a Buddhist nation where it would be extremely difficult for any of them to even live a long and happy life, let alone hear about and follow Christ?

I began praying about this after we visited the village, after holding those children in my arms. When I started thinking about these little guys as eternal beings ... yeah, it just broke me. Where are they going to be, after a life full of pain and poverty, for eternity? My heart breaks at the uncertainty of an answer. In my time with Him, God lead me to many verses that revealed who He was, is and will be, again to my heart.

Ps 107:9; Ps 10:14, 17-18; Ps 74:21

God just affirmed to me His love. He is the Father of the fatherless and the Helper of the oppressed. That He has so many names to go by, ones that would do more justice to His power and His might and His glory, yet there are so many passages like this, revealing His heart for these very children, really showed me something. That love that I just had a glimpse of, that radically changed my life, is nothing compared to what God is wholly capable of. His love is truer, realer, deeper, and more whole for these Thai children than mine could ever be. What I feel in my heart for them, I realized, is a shallow emotion compared to the affection and desire for them that my God must have, so much so that He sacrificed His Son on a cross for them. Funny, that all my questions and concerns always come back to this. Christ on the cross. 



Spiritual Networking

Facebook Wall Posts from Thai Staff
to Lightbearers Team Members

To Rachel (1/15/10):
“hey friend!! I didn’t talk to you 3 days...huh miss you:)) I like your profile’s pic, its like mom and daughter haha.” –Beau

To Brian (1/31/10):
“hello..Brad Pitt ! LOL”
–Ploy

To Sarah (2/5/10):
“Sarahhhh...you left me. Ahhhhhhh you made me sad and can’t sleep at 2.30 am. in Thailand... LOL.” –Ploy

To Abbi (2/14/10):
“happy valentine’s day. I always miss you.”
–Beau

To Sarah (2/28/10):
“Thank you a lot for serve the Lord together with us pray for our new believers will baptism about 4-5 person at 6 March. May God bless you.”
–Mini

To Lauren: (2/26/10):
“Laurennnnnnnnnn!!!
Do you remember me? haha
How are you? :D miz you Sa wad dee ka.”
–Ploy

To Adam: (3/3/10):
“Hi adam,how are ya?now am at Bangkok,so this friday-Sunday will have a shalom Church camp at the place near Bangkok. So please pray for 4 students from Khonkaen will be baptizing, Beua, Ploy, Bird, Noi..... Thanks Dude!” –Art

To Abbi (1/31/10):
“Woww...you are so beautiful in your profle pic! Abbi” –Ploy

To Lauren (1/9/10):
“Lauren!!!! i wanna say something to you..you are beautiful like princess’~~ IT IS THE TRUTH :D:D I miss youuuuuuuuuuu.” –Ploy

To Brian (1/12/10):
“It look like Chris Tomlin wanna take picture with you. You are so nice.” –Kai

To Jeremy (1/9/10):
“hey Germany ! lol (can i call you this name? haha) come back haha..i’ll show stupid games more...:P” –Ploy

To Rona (1/21/10):
“hey ! don’t forget that you have cute friend in Thailand !! haha :P how are you, my mali?”
–Ploy

To Rachel (2/9/10):
“I am still miss you.
Te extraño mucho!”
–Kai



a final word

by Kevin McCollum, *Lightbearers Executive Director*

SETTING TOILETS, SERVING PASTORS

I'll bet you never imagined a slogan like that. Crossed from the list of potential headlines were "Dishwashers Deliver Dollars," "Projects Paid with Pre-Teen Passion," and the close second, "Ignited Teens Fuel Missions."

Spring break week at our newest apartment complex was a frenzy of activity, as three northwest Arkansas churches mobilized their youth to help us make it a renewable resource for Great Commission projects in the 10/40 Window. Well over 100 kids participated in a week during which passion met painting, cleaning revealed character, and humility filled the hours each day.

More than the 60 dishwashers they installed or the 17 dumpster loads of "treasures" they amassed, we were blessed to see the kids "get" the vision of Lightbearers and how their service plays a role.

During the orientation, the students learned that Lightbearers funds a pastors-training program in the Middle East for the underground church at a cost of just \$40 per pastor. Every dishwasher installed, every toilet set, every wall painted took on greater meaning within the context of a purpose bigger than the task at hand.

"One dishwasher equals two pastors trained!"

"Hang the sheetrock and another underground church is served!"

Kids learned how to lay wood flooring, finish sheetrock, set toilets, install insulation, and a myriad other skills. Most important, they learned that serving Christ is a requirement and a blessing for all

who call Him Lord. That is the lesson that we pray continues beyond the week — and beyond the students.

Could this be a lesson for all of us? Is service for Christ our highest goal? It should be.

The world offers plenty to distract, deter, and dazzle us into a state of insulated numbness. Jesus' words to "deny ourselves" can seem foreign. *Deny ourselves of what?* Mainly, the world — the things that make us comfortable, carefree, and ever-coveting new things. He continues, "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" Temporary offerings stand in the way of eternal hope.

Service to the King is a mandate and a protection from getting caught in the quicksand of materialism. In His service, all are needed yet none are elevated, and comfort comes from the dwelling Christ, not the designer couch. In His service, wealth is meant to be temporary and weariness brings the satisfaction of a job well done. In His service, the world fades into unattractive patterns of gray, while the glorious mission of the gospel ignites the soul to action.

Thanks kids, parents, church leaders, and staff for providing a shining example of Kingdom service.

You may have left the week paint-stained and worn, but you renewed in us a passion to ignite others to follow your example. Stay the course, shed the world, and remember "\$40 dollars trains a pastor in the Middle East." 🔥



 **LIGHTBEARERS**
ministries

mobilize+connect money prayer manpower

Our Mission: To mobilize and connect renewable resources to Great Commission projects in the 10/40 Window utilizing the platform of residential discipleship.



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

As a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), we are committed to responsible stewardship, financial integrity, and independent accountability.