

Bird Seed..... Dec/Jan 2010

by Robin McCoy

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

December 18

We had around 30 students in attendance for our CGM Christmas party. We learned the words to: Away in a Manger, Joy to the World and the Twelve Days of Christmas and then sang. I explained Christmas symbols to the students, such as: the shape of the Christmas tree, the colors red and green, the star, wreath, angel, bell, etc. Ar shared the Christmas story. Next, Joe led the fun games and we had plenty of food (as always). It's always a fun time with our students.

December 19

Last day of classes for the term; afterwards, many of our church members came to CGM to begin our Christmas caroling. We went to the homes of several congregation members to sing and be invited into their homes for meals, goodies and fellowship. I loved singing outside the homes and looking at the neighbors who were looking out of their doors or windows to see and hear what was going on. Since it was in Thai, the neighbors could understand what they heard.



December 20

An older lady named Arina was baptized during our Christmas service. What a wonderful celebration to receive a new member into our Lord's family. We had a luncheon after the service and then our church Christmas party. Four of our CGM students came to join in our church Christmas celebration.

December 21

Joe, Ar, Mam (a Buddhist) and I left for Mae Hong Son (Ar's home village); a 10 hour drive. We left around 5am. Once we arrived, we unloaded everything and made sure everything was ready for each place we would visit during the next couple of days. We spent the rest of the evening visiting with Ar's wonderful family.

December 22

We were on our way early in the morning to go farther north, near the Myanmar border. It was a 2-3 hour drive from Ar's home. We went to a hill tribe village (the first time for Joe and Ar to go to this village) Ar's brother-in-law is a soldier, patrols the border and helps the people in this village. There are six soldiers who are stationed at this village. Ar's brother-in-law is a Buddhist, but he wanted Joe and Ar to take Christmas to the people/children there. We took food, clothes, school supplies and toys. We told them about Christians and Christmas. This was the first time they had ever heard about Christmas. What a blessing to watch their faces as we shared Christmas with them. Joe and Ar will add this hill tribe village to their yearly Christmas ministry.



December 23

Our first stop was at a day care center near Ar's home. Joe and Ar have been taking Christmas to them for a few years now. The children were excited as they watched us bring in the Christmas tree and the gifts. We sang with them, Ar read the Christmas story to them (they loved the beautiful pictures), we played some games, let them make a craft and then gave them gifts. They were all so excited. We said a prayer, then they enjoyed lunch and we said our goodbyes, with lots of hugs.

We began taking things to the activity center where our big Christmas party would take place. Ar and Joe had always had the party at Ar's home, but this year they had been offered this nice big place to have their party. Since it wasn't at Ar's home, they weren't sure how many children would be able to come. They were hoping for at least 30. We had plenty of gift bags made up and Ar's family (mostly Buddhists) made two huge pots of food. It was close to the time of the party and we had everything all set up and ready to go. We looked around and only had around 20-25 children. We worked on a few things at the front of the center, heard things getting louder and when we looked around again, there were well over 50 children. We ended up with over 150 children and over 50 parents. We fed everyone, but were scraping the bottom of the pots for the last ones served. Ar's brother, who is a Christian, helped to MC with Joe and Ar. He helped with the songs and activities. I taught them about the Christmas symbols, and several traditions of an American Christmas. Later, Ar



questioned them about what I had taught them and the ones who remembered received prizes. Some of the young men from a local church volunteered to play our music for us. There were about 20% there who were Christian. Joe and Ar have been doing this Christmas party for several years. They are so thankful for the growth of this ministry and the seeds that are being received. I am so thankful that I got to be a part of this wonderful ministry this year. (I am also very happy that Mam learned so much about Christmas by being with us on this trip)

December 24

We spent the day sightseeing. We went to a Chinese shopping village, where we had lunch, went to a hot springs and boiled eggs, and then we went to Ar's Dad's farm. In the evening, we went to Ar's brother's ministry. He is the minister of a place called "Rehabilitation Through the Gospel". This ministry helps men (through Scripture) who have drug and alcohol addictions. We went in, sat with the men (there were six there). We sang some songs, Ar spoke to them and then they asked me to speak to them (Ar translated).

December 25

In the morning, Ar's Mom came to the house where we were staying. She had her threads and sticks and set up her weaving process, so she could show me her craft. She makes scarves and purses. After she showed me, she motioned for me to sit. She strapped the weaving belt around me, set me up and showed me how to weave. I worked on the project for about 15 minutes; she smiled and nodded her head in approval of my work. Later, when it was time to leave, she gave me a scarf and one of the purses she had made. She said something in Thai and Ar translated. She said, "We may not be able to talk to each other with words, but we can talk to each other with our hearts." With tears in our eyes, we hugged each other and I kissed her hands. I said my goodbyes to the family then Joe and Ar took Mam and I to meet our bus for coming back to Bangkok. What wonderful blessings I received in Mae Hong Son.

December 26

A day of rest, laundry and repacking.

December 27

After church, Pastor Sompong, Tongtip, D.D., Jitt, Betsy and I took off for Isan (which means "Gateway to the East"). Our first stop was a church in Sikhoui (pronounced CQ). We had a Christmas party with the church members and neighbors there. We had BBQ kabobs and other things for dinner. I helped with the BBQing. It was a lot of fun for me to get to BBQ. Pastor gave a message to the people about Christmas, and then he asked Betsy and I to sing. We sang a medley of Away in a Manger, Hark the Herald Angels and Joy to the World. After the party we

went to a house that some people own, but who weren't there at the time. When it was time to take our showers (the shower/bathroom was attached to the house, but sort of outside), we saw a HUGE spider. Pastor got rid of the spider (I was thrilled it wasn't a snake!!).

December 28

We went on to visit relatives of Pastor Sompong. When we got to Jitt's parents home, they had lots of food and the food didn't stop the whole time we were there. Some I could eat and some I could not, but it was OK because Pastor explained my situations with them and all was OK.



They liked their beer! If a glass would get to halfway, they would be right there to refill the glass. I put my hand over the top of the glass a couple of times, but they removed my hand and filled...I gave up and just made sure to drink slowly!! I found out that Jitt's Mom is a caddy at the local golf course. I said that I loved golf. Pastor told Jitt's Dad and Mom and then plans were made for us to play nine holes the next morning. I was so excited!! We stayed in a nice resort that evening. Jitt's family knows the owner and was able to get the rooms for us for half price.

December 29

We got up early and went to Jitt's family to have breakfast. Beer was the drink for our breakfast! Off we went to the golf course. When we had everything ready to go for our golf game and I was told to be on the lookout for wild elephants. I was told that they sometimes will come out of the woods and charge the golfers. I was told to always know where there is a tree to hide behind. As Jitt's dad, mom, Pastor or I would be ready to drive the ball, the others would watch the woods to make sure there were no elephants ready to charge. We never saw any and had a great time!! After our game, we had some snacks.....and beer! We then went to a nature park and a zoo. Then, we had dinner with Jitt's family and (more beer). When we got back to our cabins we sang some karaoke before we turned in for the night.

December 30

We went back to Jitt's family's home to say our goodbyes. Jitt's grandmother was there. D.D. and I went for a little walk and when we got back, Jitt's grandmother was already gone. I told Jitt I was sad because I didn't get to say goodbye to her sweet grandmother. Jitt pulled me by hand, we jumped onto her motorbike and went to the market where her grandmother was. I went up to her and we gave each other a big hug. She excitedly told the others around her

something in Thai. Jitt told me that she was proudly telling all of her friends that I was her foreigner friend who had come to visit their family. We got back to Bangkok around 10pm.

I know this is very long. There are so many more things I would like to share, but there would be twice as many pages. Many thanks to our Lord who granted me so many blessings during these trips, safe travels, new friends, but most importantly the relationship building, so as to share the Gospel with these beautiful people. Thank you to all of you who help in so many ways so that I may have these wonderful opportunities to share. May you all find the beauty, grace, peace and love of God's Gift all through the New Year. Robin (Birdie)

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