

Kiwi kid in Thailand

I live in Chiangmai, Thailand with my family. Sometimes it is easy to forget that this is a Buddhist country, but when we travel outside our community it is very obvious. It is impossible to miss the monks dressed in bright orange robes with their shaved heads, outside shops and in the streets. And in people's homes spirit houses are very common, and sometimes there are small altars with incense burning along the footpath outside a shop or school. You have to be careful not to trip over them!

The temples (called 'Wats') are everywhere and really big and all covered with gold. They also play loud music and sometimes we can hear chanting. It is sad to see some people praying to the altars with images of Buddha on them. Buddha is not alive like our God and he can't answer their prayers. A lot of the time the people are scared of the spirits so they give them food and gifts as they think that makes them happy. Most Thai people have nicknames as they try to 'trick' the spirits into thinking they are somebody else.

Please come to Thailand to help us spread the gospel of Jesus.

Written by Jordan Sing (11 years old)

Jordan Sing, age 11. Jordan and his sister Megan share their parents with other WEC kids attending Grace International School in Thailand. (Dorm parents Chiang Mai Thailand)



Jordan Sing



reaching people planting churches

“Where are you going?”

That is the voice that the young man heard as he stepped into the river, preparing to throw himself into the torrent and end his life. He stepped back quickly, looked around and seeing no one, he recalled the words he had heard about the One True God and his Saviour-son Jesus.

Another young man was given a gospel of John in Tibetan by two foreigners in a remote town. Reading the book his plans to avenge his father's death were interrupted as he discovered the one who died on a cross for the sins of the world.

We are trusting for many miracles and divine interventions. Join us as we call on him to increasingly show forth his glory among the Tibetan people.

Not every Tibetan has such a story, though many encounter God in dreams. One lady described to me a vision of herself standing in a river bed with groups of people on either side on the banks. One group looked dark and veiled and familiar to her as they called her harshly to come to them. The other group was all in white and had shining faces, calling her name to join them. She had just decided to take a step towards Jesus when she had this dream and asked me the meaning of it.

God knows how to win the hearts of Tibetans and now seems to be the time that he is “on the move”, like Aslan, who's not been visible for a time but is about to show himself in power. We are learning to step out and trust God to back up his word with signs and wonders. We are learning to love the Tibetans and see them through God's eyes – not just focussing on them as sinners but seeing them as precious in his sight, expecting the God of love to show himself to a people lost in binding traditions and suffering of many kinds.



Tibetan countryside

WEC International
reaching people planting churches



0800 GO INTO (46 46 86)

Tel: 07 824 3211 35 College Drive
Email: into@wecnz.org Gordonton
Web: www.wecnz.org RD1 Taupiri 3791



be seen
in the
crowd



Finity Design Limited
Ph [09] 576 6999
Email info@finitly.co.nz
www.finitly.co.nz

Finity looks for design inspiration in the uniqueness of your company and expresses it in a fresh but timeless way...

▼ inside

- How to ...pray for a cross-cultural worker • A tribute to DoMeePaa • Christianity is the same as Buddhism!

How to ...pray for a cross-cultural worker

Praying every day for a cross-cultural worker not only blesses the person you are praying for but allows you to be part of the work

Monday – Pray for renewal, protection and stability

- Days are usually full, so ask that time would be found to spend with God and receive the Holy Spirit
- Not knowing how to buy today's lunch can be both exhilarating and exhausting ... pray all material needs would be provided and for good health in a foreign climate
- Distress, discouragement and disheartenment can be regular visitors, so prayer for strength is often needed – as is knowing when to take a break!

Tuesday – Pray for open doors

- Courage is essential for walking through these doors; also wisdom – to keep them open
- 24-hour bus journeys, bicycle rides to the next village and 50 km upstream in a canoe – all travel requires prayer for help and protection
- The church is God's number one plan, so pray for the church where your worker is based overseas

Wednesday – Pray your worker would love and be loved

- Family relationships can be complicated when abroad ... relatives are left behind and sometimes children are sent to boarding school. Pray for happy family times and the children's sense of involvement. Similarly, that singles would be blessed with close friendships
- Ask for good relationships with local churches and the local community
- It's no secret that successful team work can be a challenge, so ask God to help overcome cultural, linguistic and generational differences

Thursday – Pray for sustained harmony and acceptance

- Making local friends and contacts is pivotal ... pray for the provision of lessons and the necessary motivation and determination needed for learning a new language
- Language helpers are often the first people a worker will get to know, so pray they will be blessed in their work
- Pray for observational skills and sensitivity to cultural nuances



Friday – Pray for the nation

- Politically speaking, there's potential for instability in all countries, so don't forget to pray for leaders and government
- Religious freedom is not always available, so ask God to break down any barriers which may exist – political or cultural
- 'Mission exists because worship doesn't' (John Piper). Pray for more worshippers! Seeing results will really encourage your worker.

Most cross-cultural workers send out regular prayer letters and with today's technology you can email, skype, phone or txt to keep in regular contact. Contact us if you would like more information.

Have you seen the 365 global prayer website? Go to www.globalprayer365.com to be part of prayer around the world, for the world.

(Based on an article by Catherine Varley)



A tribute to DoMeePaa

We had walked many hours from the main road to reach TiiJuLaKhii. When we arrived at the village for the first time, DoMeePaa turned to Keith, his American friend and asked, "Are these the ones we are praying to come and join us?" We ended up serving among the Karen for 14 years.

Sometime during those years, DoMeePaa told us how he came to know Jesus. DoMeePaa used to be an animist, believing a person had thirty three spirits, three good ones and thirty not so good. He had four children. One day one of them got sick. DoMeePaa sacrificed a chicken to call back the spirits of the child, but the child got worse and died. A short time later a second child got sick. This time he asked the spirit specialist to help divine the problem. He performed the sacrifices prescribed by the spiritist but the spirits had no pity and the child died.

Heartbroken and angry, DoMeePaa decided he would no longer serve the leading spirit MuGolii. He had heard of a group of Karen in MawDta who worshipped the creator God, so he and a friend walked 3 days to reach the village. When they got there, they believed the good news and were baptised.

DoMeePaa returned to TiiJuLakhii but his neighbours were not happy with his new faith and made him build his house outside the village. This didn't stop him though and together with Keith, he walked from village to village, all over the MaeLa



mountains, sharing the good news. He was like the man in the story of Mathew 13:45, who discovered a pearl of great value and sold all to buy it. Today there are Christians in around twenty different villages and they recognise DoMeePaa as the main person who helped them understand the gospel.

DoMeePaa passed away at the beginning of this year. When I visited Thailand in July, I met up with his son who once shared that following in his father's footsteps was a hard calling and too high a price to pay. However, after his father died, he changed his mind and is now helping in the church! The next day we travelled together to 3 more villages and at each place we met with the believers. It was wonderful to see them worshipping the Lord and reaching out to others. To me, this is such an amazing illustration of what church planting is all about: To go to a place where there are no or few believers, to reach them with the Good news, to plant churches, to train and mobilise.

John & Alison lived among Karen people for many years and have since been serving in the WEC office at Gordonton. The Karen churches continue to experience God's blessing.



John & Alison



Church at TiiJuLaKhii

“Christianity is the same as Buddhism!”

How's that for a response to your careful explanation of the good news?



'Prayer flags' (with Buddhist scriptures printed on them) on a mountain pass

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with Tibetan Buddhists -where does one start? Why would a Tibetan respond in that way? My answers to these questions have changed a lot in over ten years seeking to do just that – present Jesus to Tibetan people. In fact, I can't say that I have the answer yet, though we have learned a few things, seen a few successes and failures, and thankfully, we are quite excited about where we've come and what lies ahead.



Nomad tent (made from woven yak hair)

It's never been difficult to strike up a “religious” conversation with a Tibetan, especially with monks and lamas. They are even impressed that we have faith, and more so if we know something about Buddhism (they find it insulting if we try to share about our “religion” without knowing anything about theirs). But it always used to frustrate me when, after a lengthy conversation, I would receive the above response! After some time I realised that this response could be triggered for a number of reasons: maybe I communicated poorly and they really didn't get it! Or maybe they didn't want a confrontation and my Western style of sharing about Jesus was leading towards that (even though it wasn't my conscious intention). Being concerned about relationships and “face”, they were looking for points of contact and similarity rather than differences to debate (though monks will enjoy a debate under the right circumstances).



Tea break at a Tibetan Nunnery

The focus of much of our sharing used to lie on the message rather than on the listeners needs or on myself as the messenger. Of course the content of the message is important, but it falls upon deaf ears to those who do not sense respect for them as people or for their religion.



Women looking at an illustrated gospel booklet

And what about the rest of the gospel? Is it not the love of God that we are supposed to be showing forth? And what about the power of God? Is it not the signs of the Kingdom that are supposed to follow its proclamation?



Khambas with children in a remote place

Recently we had the privilege of seeing a number of Tibetan Christians set free from all kinds of bondages and step into a new dimension of joy in the Holy Spirit. For some this was a shock. Coming from a culture that interacts with the supernatural, some of them had accepted a version of Christianity that was without power, leaving them ill-equipped to rise above the pressures they faced daily. One, an ex-monk, said that he was so impressed by Jesus' words to “love your enemies” that he thought Christianity must be a high religion indeed. Others had been drawn by the Spirit's power via dreams, visions or audible voices but upon receiving Christ had had no instruction about how to grow in those areas. Hence their surprise when they had an opportunity to pray for the sick and people were healed!



We continue to seek for more contextualised ways to share Jesus with Buddhists, we seek to counter the falsehood that says “to be a Tibetan is to be a Buddhist”. But we recognise that demonstrations of love and power will open the door to their hearts to prepare them to receive a message that might otherwise bring an indifferent or even aggressive response. Many Tibetans come to our city to seek medical help at the big hospitals. Recently I met a boy with a large inoperable tumour on his face. This kind of encounter provides an opportunity to demonstrate the love of God, and we trust, the power of God, to people without hope. Our prayer is that through such an encounter we may introduce this boy and his family to Jesus Christ and that Jesus would show himself to be far superior to “religion” and religious arguments, be they Buddhist or even our own inadequate representations of Jesus himself.

Chiangmai – Hostel assistant

Minimum period: 10 months

Description: Like the fun of kids and the challenge of teens? The WEC hostel for workers' children attending Grace International school needs a single or couple to support the hostel parents by:

- Providing cover for the hostel parents to have time off
- Helping to organise activities
- Cooking some meals etc
- Being available to the teenagers and to build relationships with them

Qualifications: Experience of working with teenagers would be valuable.

Chiangmai – Teachers needed

Teacher for missionary children aged between 5-18, Kindergarten - Grade 12, Grace International School (GIS). Check the GIS website for detailed list of current needs. Minimum period, 2 years.

Church Planters

Needed in many locations

Minimum period: 4 years, maximum lifetime.

Description: To become a worker among the Karen people requires 2-years of Thai language study followed by a further 2-3 years of Karen language study. There remain many unreached villages in the Karen hills. Anyone up for the challenge? NB: The least reached Karen villages are also the least accessible. It would help to be physically fit to join this ministry.

Retirees

Minimum period: one month.

Description: Opportunities for retirees (single or couple) over the age of 50 willing to share their personal testimony with an unreached person/people. No language learning is required because they will accompany a worker who will act as translator during visits to homes and teahouses.

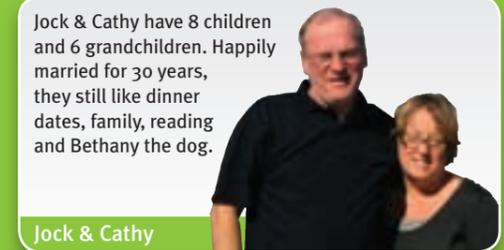
Qualifications: Healthy. Fairly energetic. Comfortable sharing their personal testimony. Comfortable sharing from the Bible. Flexible with planning. Able to pray with eyes open and looking around. Some cross-cultural experience a plus.

These are just a few examples among numerous possibilities to serve with WEC teams. For more info visit www.wecnz.org or call us at 0800 GO INTO

More Info

When I was in Thailand recently I heard about the Buddhist who read the Gospels and Acts. They were amazed and said that Jesus Christ was an amazing person – very, very good. They had read that Jesus had achieved enlightenment in only five lives. They had read of his birth, life and death in Matthew. Then this recurred in the Gospel of Mark. Yes, there were subtle differences but that was just as one would expect from such a good person. Then in Luke, he was born, lived doing many healings and miracles, but died again. In John they saw Jesus as the great worker of signs of worthiness and of course he died again at the end of the book. But in Acts, he is alive again and ascending into enlightenment. Only 5 lives – amazing!

This little story [maybe apocryphal] underscores the challenges of reaching out effectively to Thai Buddhists. Paul prayed, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.” (Eph 1:18). The Thai church has a vision to see 1,000,000 Christians by the year 2015. There are about 400,000 believers now so this target represents a huge rate of growth. Let us stand with them in prayer for this harvest.



Jock & Cathy have 8 children and 6 grandchildren. Happily married for 30 years, they still like dinner dates, family, reading and Bethany the dog.

Jock & Cathy

STAFF NEEDED: CATERER



This is a voluntary position as part of the NZ WEC team.

Someone with an interest in cross cultural ministry to cater for up to 50 people starting February and July (3 month blocks).

IT Volunteer Needed

Familiar with networks & Microsoft office.

We need a team player who would like to facilitate others in mission.

Contact Jock Brunskill (07) 8243211 if you are interested in either of these positions.



April 9th - 13th 2012

Exploring barriers in our journey with God, and the myths & truths of missions.

www.wecnz.org for more or call John or Alison (07) 824 3316

Eastwest College of intercultural studies

training you to cross cultures



(07) 824 3417
info@eastwest.ac.nz
www.eastwest.ac.nz

- One-Year Certificate in Foundations for Intercultural Studies (ESOL)
- One-Year Certificate of Intercultural Studies
- Two-Year Diploma of Intercultural Studies

