

Working in South East Asia with...

I'm struggling to put in words all that has taken place since we returned to Thailand just over two months ago. I'll try to summarise as best I can. First though we want to thank you for your prayers for us during this time. We knew life was going to be busy with seminars and meetings followed by a busy travel schedule. God has answered your prayers and carried us through .

The initial days of renting a house, getting personal things from storage and buying additional items for the house seem so far away now. We were able to move into a house that we had previously rented. That made the process a lot easier. We already knew the landlord and were pleased to live among neighbours and friends who have looked out for us in the past. This is especially good when I have to be away from home and Bobby is here alone.

Training & Planning

The first of our workshops was to help our teams develop foundational bible curricula that present the truths of God's Word clearly in the culture of specific people groups. This was followed by Church Development meetings and finally our Asia leadership forum. Much of our time was spent reinforcing those church planting methods that have the end goal of seeing churches established that have all they need to grow toward maturity, and not just a hurried presentation of the 'gospel'.



Of the 150 (approx) attendees at the leadership forum about one third were either Asian national workers with NTM or Asian church leaders. There was an amazing sense of unity in the group as missionaries and national church leaders from Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia met and fellowshiped together. Simultaneous translations were provided during the meetings but at meal times people seemed to find a way to communicate with their co-workers from around the region. Each of us recognise that even greater levels of partnership, drawing on all our resources, will be required to see the growth of the church in Asia in the coming days.

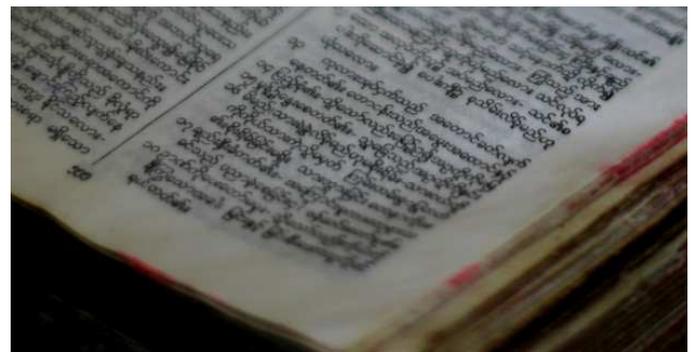
As we rubbed shoulders with many of these Christian workers we received a number of requests for information about the people groups of S E Asia. We have also been asked to extend the people group database to include a further five countries in South Asia. This is a sizable undertaking and Bobby has already started to gather information for this project. This research and People Group Assessments take a lot of time and effort but it reflects the intent of our mission leaders to continue to reach out to those who have the least access to the gospel.



Myanmar

Myanmar, better known as Burma, is a fascinating country. We have read about its history, researched its people groups and watched with interest the political changes that are taking place there. Some of the one hundred plus ethnic groups have been exposed to God's Word from the time of Adoniram Judson and range from being nominal Christians to vibrant followers of Christ. Others are gripped by a mix of belief systems and have still to be impacted by the gospel.

In November I had the privilege of spending ten days with three co-workers in Myanmar. We travelled to Yangon, north to Mandalay and on to western Shan State. We visited and spoke in simple little churches and bible schools, witnessed church planting work going on in a Yangon slum and hiked to tribal villages. We discussed the needs of the ethnic groups around the country and heard of their efforts to reach them. What we saw were some very faithful servants of God who have a burden for the people of their own country, who are going with the gospel themselves and training others to go. These men and women are undeterred by their limited physical resources, the help they seek is partnership in prayer and help with training and preparation of national church planters.



Judson's translation of the Bible is still widely used

The purpose of our visit was to meet these believers, to find out about their ministries and to gain a better understanding of the church in Myanmar. We also wanted to determine if there is a role for us (NTM) in the country and what that might be. We were humbled to see what God is doing there and by the encouragement we received to become involved. There is plenty to be done!



Interesting facts:

Motorcycles are not allowed in Yangon

#Although the authorities switched traffic to drive on the right hand side of the road in 1970, most of the vehicles, including newly imported ones are right hand drive.

Harvesting with the Bru

Toward the end of the month we were delighted to have our friends Mark & Karen come to visit from N Ireland. We enjoyed showing them around Chiang Mai and up to the North East to visit our Bru friends. I think our time in the village with Clark & Mary was probably the highlight of their visit. It was rice harvesting season and we were able to help with harvesting and gathering the sheaves into piles to be threshed. The believers had arranged this year to help one another in their fields. This was especially helpful to some struggling families and a good testimony to those who don't yet believe. On Sunday we met for worship and enjoyed a meal together, north east Thailand style.



Thanksgiving & Prayer

Last week we shared a 'Thanksgiving' meal with some American friends. We are reminded that we have so much to be thankful for. James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

Praise:

- ❖ That we can be part of the ministry here at this time
- ❖ For excellent meetings & profitable trip to Myanmar
- ❖ For the growth of the Bru church & progress with scripture translation
- ❖ For God's grace & strength each day

Prayer:

- ❖ Ongoing health and strength
- ❖ Wisdom for direction of work in SE Asia, specifically Myanmar
- ❖ Calmness & political stability in Thailand

In a few weeks we will celebrate Christmas. May God bless you with His peace, the peace that was proclaimed at the birth of Christ and provided through His death.

*Thank you for your prayers and support throughout another year,
Norman & Bobby*

Luke 2:13-14

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Gifts toward personal or ministry expenses can be sent to the finance office at New Tribes Mission at the above address or online at www.ntm.org.uk indicating that the gift is for N & B Murphy. UK tax payers qualify for tax to be reclaimed on their giving. For more details contact us or the New Tribes Mission finance office.

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