

December 2018



Dear Friends,

It was so precious to come back to the children, some of whom kept saying 'you came back!' when they saw us. And yet it has been a particularly challenging time. There is a song we often listen to that brings a tear to my eye, which has the words: **'Break my heart for what breaks yours, everything I have for your kingdom's cause.'**

That about sums up our time since we arrived back in Thailand!

Some of the situations we have faced have nearly broken our hearts. One of our young people, 13-year old Non, had a motorbike accident a few weeks after we arrived back and his situation has been heart-breaking. Although there is a public health care system in Thailand, it covered him only until he was deemed stable after his brain operation, and then they discharged him home, to the slums. He has a tracheotomy, a very misshapen head with his skull part missing, and has been unable to move, and his single parent mum has to work or the family don't eat. The slum house his family live in has no window boards or doors, just open spaces and fans, and is very hot, and we and his mum fought hard to keep him in the hospital with air con and nurses available, to no avail. For several weeks after his discharge we watched as he became more and more gaunt and tried to work out how to feed him more to stop him losing weight through his nose tube. His family were cooking him vegetables and pork, mashing it, and feeding him through a straw into his nose tube which went down to his stomach. But he was still losing weight alarmingly. We bought milk drinks, but he was like a skeleton the following week with despair in his eyes and covered in flies, with a high fever. We prayed for God to intervene and he did: he provided a place and the money to put him into a nursing home for a month. Three days after arriving there he had put on weight, had no temperature, was clean and was starting to communicate by blinking. They had taken his catheter out and he looked like a different person. This week he had to go back to the hospital for an appointment to see the doctor about back sores and to review his brain, He cried when his mum told him as he really didn't want to go back.

It has been a traumatic time for everyone involved. Before the accident his mum was very anti-Christian and made her daughters write a letter of apology for bringing a bible home from the Place of Grace when they became Christians, and yet she said she has been praying every night for God to help Non. It has also been a reminder to us about how God's heart is for the one. Many people, lovely people, told us not to get emotionally involved, we can't fight the system, that is just how it is for the poor and at times we have felt like we were almost alone in this fight except for our wonderful prayer warriors and staff. And yet God would not let that precious young boy starve or die of an

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Non, before and after the accident (photos taken from a facebook post)

infection unnecessarily, and the relief of that was overwhelming for us. We cried with relief the first time we went to the home and also the first time we visited him when he moved in. Please continue to pray with us for Non and his family.

Our clubs, foodbank and discipleship groups keep running every week and we repeatedly see God's concern for the one. A young man at our girl's college in America was tragically killed in a road accident recently and we felt that God wanted us to share his dad's message of hope and bravery with our oldest group. His dad said please, my son was a Christian and thought he would have tomorrow, but he didn't. But he did know where he was going, to be with Jesus. One of the boys, Orm, who is 16 and had only just started coming to the group started to cry whilst we were sharing the story, and afterwards he asked us to help him to become a Christian. It was only on the way home we remembered that Orm's dad had been killed in a road accident and it was another reminder of God's chasing after each one in a way that we understand.

We had a couple of boys move into the slum last month. As we got to know them they also broke our hearts a little bit. The older boy had been looking after his brother for several years, as the mum was very unwell with mental health issues. The older boy also accepted Jesus into his life, although they had to go to a state children's home in the end as they didn't have accommodation and we weren't able to help them with it. Nai's pain in being taken away was heart-breaking as he had spent time in a state children's home before and had desperately tried to avoid it for his brother. They clung to us as they took them away. Please pray for these lovely boys, Nai and Not.

One of the things that we have felt God asking us to do for a long time is to set up a safe house for the children and young people who become suddenly vulnerable, so it buys us time to sort out a good option for them. In this case if we could have given them accommodation until Nai was 18 (this month) and we could have helped him find a proper job and accommodation for them both. Please pray for us as we explore this further.

The words 'everything we have for your kingdom's cause' this time has not just been emotional but also physical. We are now officially a foundation, or charity, in Thailand, and that has involved an enormous amount of work, as have the visas and work permits, which seem to get more complicated and demanding every year. It has been such a battle to get all this done as well as our regular work and home-schooling Joel. Please pray for us to have enough time and energy for all the tasks as well as to find a much needed administrator.

Thank you so much for sharing this journey with us, for all your prayers, love and support. Please pray for all our Christmas parties over this next few weeks, and that the joy of Christmas, of Jesus our Immanuel, will be real to each of the children.

Update: the place of grace was burgled last week. Please pray for all the issues concerning this.



One of the children's Christmas parties

Prayer points

- For Non, Nai and Not, Orm and all the young people who attend the Place of Grace.
- For our staff, Yaya and Fan, and for us, for a good rest over Christmas, and a precious family time with Leah and Natalie and safe journeys as they fly here for Christmas.
- For our visas and foundation work to go smoothly