

A Letter from Gary Powell -
Our Missionary in Thailand

It has been quite some time since I have written a note to you and the church. I have a day off from school and I thought I had better catch up on some correspondence. I passed the second module in language school and will progress to the next module starting tomorrow which will still be learning to speak Thai, after that will begin learning to write and read the language. I may have to repeat it again but I am giving it my best shot each day. I keep thinking that I will finish up language school around the end of April but it could be longer. I have to consider that it is God's plan not mine. After that I will be able to serve somewhere in Thailand. In between school daily and studying I still go throughout the city with other missionaries visiting the Pakistani refugees that I have been working with. Their situation gets worse every time I visit with more refugees pouring into the city from their persecution from Pakistan. They come into the country legally with a visa but when that runs out in 30 days they cannot get a visa to re-main. In previous emails I described what they go through daily to survive. I truly feel blessed to be among the missionaries to not only bring them food and pray with them but to help spread the love of Christ and to share the Gospel.

The most important message I want to convey to the church congregation is my thanks for your prayer support. I have received messages of prayer support from several people from COR and it means so much. As a missionary I put myself totally in God's hands for my survival and strength to do His will daily. It is what I call Blind Faith. Although I feel safe here I often on weekends go out into the inner most parts of the city with other missionaries doing work among the refugees. One never knows what we may face so I rely on God's protection.

I reflect upon a sermon I heard in Calvary church here on doing what God calls us to do outside the church, I thought back to what COR does within the city of Greenville and it is amazing. The church is committed to help bring the message of the Gospels to people in need. That is one thing that attracted me to the church some years ago. I encourage all in the church to take time out of their everyday lives and concerns and to deeply listen to what God expects them to do for the poor and oppressed. It may mean a total change in thinking or lifestyle but God will work His plan with you and guide and protect you along the way.

This coming Thursday is a Buddhist holiday and everything is closed in Thailand. The country is about 97% Buddhist. To me it is a mysterious religion and one that my western mind has difficulty even comprehending. I have a huge Buddhist complex the next block over from where I live and hear the gongs of bells throughout the day. Buddhist monks are everywhere during the day bestowing blessings on people and begging for alms. All houses, hotels and even stores have 'Spirit Houses' that according to Buddhist beliefs, protect from evil spirits entering. One sees the Thai people bowing and placing offering at their altars when passing by. There are a number of Christian denominations here including an Anglican, Catholic, Baptist and Evangelical but they are small compared to the Buddhist. When I look at the calendar I see November about to roll around with Thanksgiving ahead. The only holidays recognized here in Thailand are the King and Queen's birthdays and about 4 or 5 Buddhist holidays.

I have rambled on enough. Please know that your continued prayers are felt by me.

Blessings to all.

Your missionary working for His Glory,

Gary