

Land of Smiles

Newsletter of Susan Staples – Ministering in Baan Ta, THAILAND
~ **DECEMBER 2017** ~

“Merry Christmas! May God’s peace rule and reign in your hearts as you celebrate once again the wonder of God in flesh coming to dwell with man.

Life in Baan Ta:

God led me to move here to Baan Ta this last May to help with a church plant. Unlike the place I was living, there is no church here, except the church that our team is planting. In Rom. 15:20, Paul talks about how he wants to preach the gospel where there isn’t a gospel witness so as to NOT build on another’s foundation. God used that verse to speak to my heart and lead me here. Baan Ta is a rural community outside the city of Chiang Rai. The pace of life here is very laid back and everyone knows everyone else. The people are steeped in Buddhism and it is a central part of their lifestyle.

Susan Staples

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A typical spirit house seen in Thailand



Carving outside one of the local temples



I met Joy during evening walks.



Students studying in the evening.

Evenings are a time when people are returning from work and school, relaxing, and fixing dinner. This is also when I take my evening walks and chat with people. This has been foundational in building relationships and seeing God bring divine appointments. I have also been visiting the families of the children who come for English class in the evenings. That has been a HUGE blessing. Neighborhood children also drop by on the weekends and God has given me wonderful neighbors.

English Teaching at Baan Ta:

God has brought about 45 children to study English over the last 6 months. God has opened the door for me to teach both at church and at my house. All 45 of these children have heard the gospel. We have been focusing more on creation and the fall of man during the first term (June – September), and now the second term we are focusing more on the life of Christ. Many of the children are interested, but there are a handful of 6th graders who are not interested. Some of the parents tell their children that it’s ok to listen to these stories because they’re just that – fairy tale stories. Just recently in English class, we did a unit on food and cooking, and we made hamburgers (with pork because beef is difficult to find here) French fries and fruit salad.



When asked if they liked the hamburgers, they said they liked the meat, but most of them didn’t like the buns.



Students reading Bible story books before class.



Teaching at church

Visitation:

October was a month filled with visiting girls who I’ve been mentoring. I visited Jaelyn, Kia, Wan, Nai, Mai and Nuay. Everyone is so spread out now! **Nai** has decided to go to college after taking a year off. I am so proud of her for making this decision. She is literally the FIRST Hmong girl I’ve ever seen who didn’t go straight to college after high school, who didn’t get married to a non-believer. She’s majoring in Chinese and is doing well. Please continue to pray for her – she’s struggling spiritually. **Nuay** graduates high school this year and she has grown so much in the Lord over the last few years. Pray for God’s continued guidance in her life. Her father is in jail on drug charges, and her mother just left to work in Korea (actually a common practice for many Thai people). **Wan** is one of the first girls that lived with us, and she continues to walk with Jesus. Her husband is working in yes, you guessed it, Israel. She’s living with her husband’s family and taking care of her 2 daughters. She wants to study English and Bible and she’s currently taking some English classes. **Jaelyn’s** husband is the interim pastor at his home church. They’re currently praying about where exactly God would have them to serve long term. **Kia** and her husband are still serving the Lord and working at church/children’s home. I went to encourage them (*Acts 15:36 “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.”*) but they encouraged me in the Lord instead.



Nuay and Nai



Jaelyn and Tan



Wan

Christmas:

The church is holding a Christmas outreach here at my house this year on the 24th. Why at my house and not at church? Because many non-believers won’t go to church, but they will come to a Christmas community event at someone’s house. And, there’s a HUGE backyard, so there’s room for lots of people. (The house I’m renting is a total gift from God. It is 2 stories, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, huge backyard all for about \$100/month.) We’re inviting pretty much the entire neighborhood, with games, gifts, songs and a message about the true meaning of Christmas.

2018:

So, what’s on track for next year? The BIG news item is this: Because I soooo enjoy southern AZ summers (yes, I’m crazy) **I will be returning to the USA summer of 2018.** I will be stateside **June 20 – September 10.** I’m so looking forward to catching up with as many of you as possible. I do miss you guys also, not just the AZ summer heat. :-)

May God bless and strengthen you and give you His peace.

Susan

Financial Contributions:

Please make checks payable to Go Ministries and **write my account number 1246 on the “for” section of the check.** Send it to:

Go Ministries 270 East Palais Rd. Anaheim, CA 92805

E-mail: susanmarie777@hotmail.com

SNAIL MAIL IN THAILAND: (new address!!) (I’m still collecting postcards, hint hint!)

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