

Merry Christmas!

This year began with much uncertainty for us here in Thailand. We weren't sure if the ministry we are a part of would face serious financial shortfalls due to the economic hardships in Europe and the United States. Equally uncertain was our personal support, which comes from many of you. Here at the end of the year God has proven that He is faithful once again. We have been blessed and blessed again. Both the **Mekong Minority Foundation** (MMF) and the Coats family are now keenly aware that God's plans weather any economic crisis. However the uncertainty has led us to rely more upon Him and we've grown less fearful throughout the year.

We are praying for all of you and the economic situation in the US. We know many of you have had a tough year and still continue to pray for us and support us. May God bless you for that.

We rejoice this Christmas season. I'd like to celebrate a few of this year's blessings with you:

- The MMF staff team has grown noticeably closer to God and is more focused on our witness of faith amidst our work in the communities.
- Tan and I have been pleased with our own spiritual growth and our children's. (Not to mention the physical changes in our teenagers!) All three of them are involved in a mission club and in youth fellowship. They have been on outreach trips to villages and deepened their understanding of Christian service.
- The wonderful school our children attend – the Family Learning Center – has been a key factor in our children's spiritual development.

As you know, I am not in the habit of making appeals. We have been blessed by your giving and have never been in want. However, this year our school needs to be strengthened and I am making a special appeal for your and your congregation's consideration.

The school has been critical for our family and many other missionary families to be able to live and serve in Chiang Rai. The time has come to transform the Family Learning Center from an unofficial school into a full fledged school with proper government recognition – the **Chiang Rai International Christian School** (CRICS).

This school serves missionary children as well as a number of children from non-Christian Thai families. We rejoice that many of these Thai students are coming to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. The school is growing rapidly. In the past 5 years the student population has tripled, increasing from 20 to nearly 70 students.

The families associated with **International Ministries** have worked hard to make the school a success. For those of us who are American Baptists, you'll be pleased to know that our mission involvement in the school is central to this growth.



Tan and I play active roles. I serve on the board while Tan teaches First Grade PE and fills in as a librarian. IM missionaries Ruth and Chuck Fox who work among the Akha are very active in the school. Ruth has led the school as the principal for the past three years. Chuck is a Board member. He and I are both members of the building committee

In addition, Joel Hoefle and his wife Trish Magal have joined us as full-time volunteers. Joel teaches at the school. Trish has been a blessing in her working at the **New Life Center**. We

enjoy their three children at the school and know that the school has helped significantly in their transition to mission work. Ruthie Simpson, a member of our home church, Ridgeview Baptist Church in Danville, IL and Sandy Michael of First Baptist Church, Mitchell, IN, bring their expertise as recently retired teachers to the school for a second year.

Thai law dictates that we must become a registered international school in the very near future. One of requirements is to have a facility that meets specifications. Some of you were a part of the first major step to fulfilling this requirement. You helped the school purchase a 7 acre property earlier in 2009. This task was completed in just 5 months at a cost of about \$100,000!

The successful completion of this first step was a major accomplishment. We believe that God has blessed this school and is calling it to be a **LIGHT** for **HIM** in northern Thailand.

The next step is to build the first classroom building. This will make the school legal. We believe that income from school operations will cover about half the cost. We need to raise about \$250,000 in the immediate future so we can begin to build.

Through your support we can enable more missionary families to come serve in this region. You are already part of the reason we are able to minister to the ethnic minority peoples here. You have been our financial and prayer support and have enabled us to help shine God's light in Chiang Rai.

On behalf of our children and the hundreds of other children who will be a benefit from this Christian school, Tan and I ask you and your congregation to consider contributing. This project is extremely important to our work. Raising \$250,000 is a HUGE task, but as God has clearly shown us this year through your faithful support, He is a HUGE God.

International Ministries is supporting this effort by allowing tax-deductible gifts for this project to be sent to them for the express purpose of developing the Family Learning Center into the **Chiang Rai International Christian School**. One hundred percent of any contributions sent before the end of 2009 will be given to the school. Checks may be sent to the address below.

International Ministries
P.O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Checks should be made out to "**International Ministries**" and note "**Development of CRICS**" in the memo line. You will receive a receipt directly from International Ministries.

Thank you taking time to prayerfully consider your role in this project... and in our lives. We cannot tell you how much your support for this project means to us! To learn more about the school, please visit the school's website, www.flcschool.com

May the gift of Christ's birth bring joy to you in this Christmas season.

Scott, Tan, Alisa, Silas and Sam