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November 2020 Prayer Letter

Our family took some time away for labor day and the week following. We spent a couple of days with three other missionary families in Thailand, soaking up the heart language fellowship and encouragement. We drove about 10 hours to a central location, but the time was well worth it. Afterwards we spent a week away with our family, time that has been pushed back since May due to Covid. While not central to what we are doing in ministry, I know that some of you will be encouraged to know that we pursue balance in our calendar. The whole time was filled with deep connections - first with our friends, and then with our own kids and each other. It was a very healthy hard reset to our mentality.

On the Sunday we spent away from our own church family here, as we prepared to worship with dear friends and fellow believers in Hua Hin, Thailand, I had a realization that brought me a surge of pure joy. It was the first Sunday that the message in our church plant was completely prepared and delivered by a convert from Buddhism who was reached right here in our ministry. It was such a blessing that I became aware of myself standing alone with a grin plastered on my face. Please pray specifically for this young man, JJ, as he

seeks to grow. Please pray that he will be made stronger through challenges, and that he would hold fast in his course to follow Christ.

After our time away we were glad to be back home and in our regular routines of ministry. We jumped into preparing for our 5th anniversary of Sila Baptist Church, and being able to stop to thank God for five years of watching Him move was very special for us and the people that have become family in Christ during that time. I have included a link to the photo montage from Sunday's celebration below.

Several of the young people who have stayed connected with us from the very first year of ministry in Lamphun are just graduating from college and coming back to find work here. While some have already been saved, others are renewing their interest in following Christ. At the same time, a senior in high school who has been attending Alisa's weekly English outreach for over a year just made a bold profession of her faith, in spite of her parent's strong opposition. Please pray for *Kobfah* as she navigates the pressure of being the very first Christian in her family. Two other recent university graduates join us for dinner every Friday night, and we have many good discussions about life and faith. We've just established a connection with a young man named *Tawan* who seems to have an open heart. Please pray for his salvation!

Building Development:

We were recently able to annex the final 1/3 of our building to our rent, giving us the ability to confidently renovate for long term ministry here. The church continues to rent and maintain a specific portion of the building, with the future goal of taking on the entire building as the church grows in number and offering budget. We are so excited to develop this area of the building to become a place where we can do many kinds of outreaches into our community here. Our ideas are plenteous - hosting dinners, story nights for kids in a cozy library loft while giving parenting classes downstairs, an open study area for students to come hang out, etc.

Please pray...

For our kids (Justin, Brody, Arie, Ava) to grow in their knowledge and love of Christ and of the people around them.

For us to be bold in our efforts to reach many people with the knowledge of Christ and for favor while we do so.

For the Christians here to grow strong in their faith and in the knowledge of the Word, to weather tests with patience and joy, and to produce abundant fruit that comes from walking in the Spirit.

For unbelievers who have heard the message of Jesus and are needing great boldness and a strong dose of the Holy Spirit's clarity of vision to see that following Christ is worth any cost.

This year we have, like many of you, experienced significant disappointments and losses. Alisa's grandfather passed away in August. Prior to that, her parents planned trip to Thailand was canceled due to Covid. Our brief furlough, scheduled for this fall, has also been indefinitely postponed. The blessings throughout this season of many challenges have been found in daily routines full of discipling believers, many encouraging books and other content, and plenty of great family time.

In ministry, there have been times of spiritual warfare, and we have seen the members of this church grow deeper in their faith through it all. God's strength and sustaining grace has been marvelous and miraculous. In times where I have faced discouragement, God's used mentors and friends to deeply encourage me. We're so grateful for the strength of the body of Christ that extends across the world, in which we take our place with gratitude. Thank you for your prayers, for your friendships, and for caring about people in Thailand and all over the world who wait to know their Maker and Redeemer.

We're thankful for you!

the Ballous



A five-minute picture montage celebrating the past 5 years of ministry since the start of our church plant.



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