

THAILAND UPDATES

Prayer points:

- *Pray for God to release funds & labour for completion of the Assisted Care Facility.*
- *Pray for physical healing and strength for all team members to deal with the heat and humidity.*
- *Pray for patience and peace on the building site to overcome difficulties and frustrations.*
- *Pray for spiritual protection for the team and for cultural sensitivity and awareness as we interact with locals.*

Wednesday 30th September

Into the routine now including a short prayer time with Gary each morning to setup the day. We decided to shift the sharing time to the afternoon to allow maximum use of the cooler mornings to get work done.

Essentially more of the same today. Blocks to be laid, blocks to be cut, mud to be mixed, steel to be cut, trusses to be welded, water to be fetched, sunscreen to be applied, smoko and lunches to be made, bandaids to be applied. Overall good progress being made and we are closing in on having the first 1,000 blocks laid. The welding team also completed 3 trusses despite quite a few problems with power.

The BNJ kids normally attend school from 0730 until 1600 which means we don't really see them. However they have a couple of days off and it is great to see them running around. I was last here in 2006 so like all kids they have grown & developed a lot which is good to see.

After a long hot day Peter spoke about being a light on a hill in a dark Buddhist nation. He also spoke from Psalm 41 1-3 and how we can be a light and help to those who are not privileged like us. Especially the Karen people and the little children. We spent some time praying for various health niggles.

Dinner was at the night markets with an opportunity for some shopping and some different food sources.

Praise Points:

- *Praise God that people are quickly recognising and resolving issues as they happen and not letting problems fester.*
- *Praise God for the progress being made on the building.*
- *Praise God that we are staying healthy and working well together.*
- *Praise God for the little children and the encouragement they give to the team just by being kids.*

Prayer Points:

- *Pray for wisdom for those who have work activities back at home that they need to take care of while they are in Thailand.*
- *Pray that we will truly show God's face to each other and to the locals who are now working with us.*
- *Pray for the BNJ kids that they will grow healthy and strong and that their personal faith in Jesus will also grow.*
- *Pray for healing of sore bodies and for sleep for some of the team who are struggling, especially Ron.*

Updates kindly supplied by team member Gordon W Carlyle

Hi Folks,

Sorry for the lack of updates to this point. It took a little while to sort out access for the outgoing email. It seems to be up and running now but as Paul Wilcox would say 'This is Thailand!'. We are all being reminded that the Thai culture is very much more driven by relationships than time so our Aussie schedule and plan driven approach just doesn't always work well. You can expect a few updates all together. BB4M team member - Gordon Carlyle

Saturday 26th – Sunday 27th September

We departed Adelaide on Saturday 26th on schedule with Qantas. All bags were checked all the way to Chiang Rai and no questions were asked about some overweight bags. The lady at the Qantas check-in remembered me from my days of frequent travel and just checked everything through. Praise God for taking care of the luggage requirements. We had a bit of a wait in Melbourne for our connection but better waiting than missing the flight to Thailand. We caught the Thai Airways flight with no problems other than some items that could not be checked through.

Nine and a half hours later we arrived on schedule in Bangkok. Jeff and Gary were able to get seats with extra legroom which was a blessing. Most of us got a little bit of sleep although it is never very good sitting in economy. We made our way through the Bangkok airport and found the connection to Chiang Rai and met up with Harvey and Glenice from Brisbane (friends of Paul and Penny who are also joining the team). The flight to Chiang Rai was uneventful and on time.

We were met by Paul, Matt and Miriam Zwarts and Anthony Nelson and taken to our hotel to check in. After a short refresh, a team meeting and some lunch we headed to Baan Nam Jai to check the site and have an introduction from Paul and Penny

The team was very keen and we actually got quite a bit of early preparation work done. One way to cure jet lag I suppose. Paul and Penny gave us an introduction to Baan Nam Jai (BNJ). As always Penny's passion and vision shone through making it easy to be inspired to help fulfil that vision and to care for the kids here at BNJ. After spending sometime sharing together we headed back to the hotel to shower have tea and get some sleep ready for the first full work day. Paul also introduced John and Ann from Melbourne (more friends) who are here to assist Paul and Penny and to join in with the team.

Praise Points:

- *Praise God for the passion and vision He places in our hearts to serve Him and to serve His children. Praise God for how that passion is so evident whenever Penny speaks.*
- *Praise God for all of the pre-work that Matt Zwarts was able to do over many weeks leading up to our arrival – it will make our work a lot easier.*
- *Praise God that the travel went well, we made all our connections and arrived safely albeit a bit tired.*
- *Praise God that Gary's chest pain proved to be muscle spasms.*

Prayer points:

- *Pray for the continued health and well being of the team, physically, spiritually & emotionally.*
- *Pray for team unity and collaboration as we form into teams to complete the work.*

- *Pray for patience as we come to grips the 'This is Thailand'*
- *Pray for wisdom for the team leaders at all levels to be able to build up and encourage the team and to hear what God is saying.*

Monday 28th September

Up at 0530 and in the transport to BNJ by 0615. On-site and ready to go at 0630. The aim is to take advantage of the cool time if we can. The ladies start preparing breakfast while the men head to the building site to prepare for the day's work. Breakfast at 0700 including a time of sharing. Gary spoke to us about taking the food we have received at church and taking it out into the world. He talked about taking what we have and letting God do the work in us and through us.

Preparation activities continued through the day with Matt and John running around buying various bits and pieces that we would need in the coming days. The block laying team got started building the corners having done much of the setting out yesterday. The lessons in the bible about the cornerstone became visually clear. Without corners in place it is impossible to build walls.

The steel had not arrived in the morning so the welding crew started on a job to retrofit some reinforcement to one of the pillars. Another lesson for the practical ones about the need for strong foundations.

Lunch was arranged at the little shop down the hill from BNJ. A meal costs 25 Thai Baht (THB), another 5 THB for a fried egg and 10 THB for a coke. Given the current exchange rate that is lunch for just over 1 AUD.

People started to form into teams and to complete preparatory tasks. A few of the team pushed a little bit hard for the first day in this climate. Most of us don't normally do a lot of physical work let alone in the Thai climate. Gary reminded the team that the task is the Lord's and we will get done what he wants us to get done. It is not just about the building but about how we show God's face here in Thailand.

Praise points:

- *Praise God that we have been able to start work with a full team and some extras.*
- *Praise God that Gary has had no further pain.*
- *Praise God that the whole team is willing to be flexible and to fit in where needed to get the job done*

Prayer points:

- *Pray that those experiencing culture shock and homesickness would be at peace and would have God's perspective on the Thai situation.*
- *Pray for patience, wisdom and ingenuity as we deal with small hiccups in setup, arrangements availability of materials etc.*
- *Pray for physical healing for those experiencing pain and soreness related to muscles and joints.*
- *Pray for flexibility and grace among the team to fit in and relate well together as we work and live together for the coming days.*

Tuesday 29th September

Starting to get into the early morning routine. Onsite by 0630 and into work. At breakfast Daryl spoke on gifts, including spiritual gifts. His focus was on what God has given us to help us complete the tasks he has put before us. He asked a few people what they were doing 10 years ago and it soon became clear that none of us were block layers and yet here we are as a team building an Assisted Care Facility in the north of Thailand. Based on that evidence it can only be God that has given us the skills and abilities and who has brought us here.

Managed to get wireless up and running (I am writing this from the Bamboo Palace) and after some help from the BNJ IT guy managed to figure out the settings to enable outgoing email. So why no updates earlier you ask? My only excuse is that I got caught up in the building activities and didn't get a chance to write emails or prepare photos with a suitable size to email. That reminds me if anyone would like higher resolution photos then let me know and I can provide them. The attachments to these updates are low resolution to minimise email traffic.

In addition to sorting out IT issues Matt and I spent some time going over the project funding and looking at what it will take to complete the Assisted Care Facility (somehow Hospice seems easier to say). The projected is funded to the point of getting the trusses done but more is needed to complete roof tiling and fit out ready for use.

A couple of decisions were made to reduce project cost including building trusses in 2 parts and casting lintels the Thai way rather than getting steel which was proving difficult.

By day's end the number of blocks laid was close to 500 much of it preparatory work that will faster work in coming days as walls are filled in. Tomorrow we get additional Thai block layers to supplement the team.

We used our normal transport, covered in utes with bench seats capable of seating about 10 of us and probably a lot more Thais, to go to the BigC shopping mall. As far as shopping malls go it wasn't to different to anywhere else in the world expect the food hall had different dishes and there were different products in the stores.

Everyone managed to find something to eat and we headed for bed tired but satisfied with our progress.

Praise points:

- *Praise God that the team continues to form into solid work groups and is starting to function together.*
- *Praise God that the team remains healthy apart from aches and pains and tiredness.*
- *Praise God that the team is taking care of each other and making sure others do not overwork.*
- *Praise God for Matt, Miriam, Anthony, John, Ann, Harvey and Glenice all of whom are fitting in with the team and providing much needed input, guidance, labour and assistance for Paul and Penny.*

**SEE THE THAILAND IMAGES ON THE MONITOR
IN THE FOYER**
