

## Prayer letter June 2012

*"and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God ... (Deut. 31:13a)*

### Low, mid, high, rising... oh no, it's falling?!

'The elephant cut my hair.' 'I don't speak the Thai canal.' It's not uncommon that we make mistakes like this. Using the wrong tone in a word, makes the Thai people frown. You suddenly realize that you made a mistake with the tones. Learning Thai is not so easy... and quite frustrating once in a while. We live in Lop Buri since the end of February and hope to study the Thai language here for about a year. We really enjoy having our own house. Well, at least for a whole year. Early March we started the language study. Each of us has 2 hours of class, with a private teacher, each day. We started with the pronunciation. The Thai language has 5 tones, which are unfamiliar to the English language. The meaning of the word depends on the tone you use. Difficult! Learning vocabularies, practicing pronunciation, composing sentences and translating ... The study of language takes a lot of our time! We improve enormously so far, since we really started from knowing absolutely nothing. It is very encouraging to notice that occasionally you can understand people or can make yourself understood. Yet we realize that we still have a long way to go, generally the language study takes at least 3 years ...

### Prayer requests:

- Give thanks for the nice contacts we have with other students
- We are thankful that the children are adjusting well to the life in Thailand
- Give thanks for all support
- We are thankful that we finished the first modules of the Thai classes
- Pray for a good progress of the language study
- Pray for enough financial support
- Pray that many Thai children may hear the Gospel

### A daily routine again

After our last move it took us some time to get used to our new home, new surroundings and activities. Meanwhile, we found a routine again. Each school day (Tuesday to Saturday) Mark brings the children to childcare. By then, Anne-Marie has her first class. Mark has his first class later in the morning and in the afternoon the second. Anne-Marie is done after the morning at school, so in the afternoon she can be at home with the children. At noon we quickly eat somewhere and then pick the kids up, who will take their afternoon nap then at home. Anne-Marie home schools Celeste and in the end of the afternoon we have some time together as a family, before we eat and the kids go to sleep. In the evening we try to study a few hours. The children enjoy going to the childcare. It is linked to the school, so the other children are also "missionary children". In terms of age, our children fit in just fine among the others! There are both Thai and Western "teachers", so they learn here to manage between 2 cultures. Occasionally they surprise us by saying something in fluent Thai! (effortlessly, while it takes us hours to study!).



Father and son enjoy their daily walk

## Not so common

Besides attending classes, we keep busy as being a young family. Apart from the daily things like shopping and such, there are occasionally less common things that happen. In the beginning of March we travelled to Cambodia with our whole family to renew our visa. This meant a 3 hour drive by car, 3 hours waiting at the border, 3 hours back in the car ... It was a long day! Shortly after that, Mark had to spend a few days in Malaysia to apply for his RA-visa. All in all, costly and time consuming business! In April we had a few free days of language study. This was because of 'Songkran', or Thai New Year. The Thai population celebrated this festival for three days. Instead of fireworks, water is being thrown here. Cars, bicycles, nothing was safe and sprayed on with a garden hose or buckets of water. Not bad, in the middle of the hot season! We enjoyed these free days, and the children also, as you can see in the picture! Since April we have also enjoyed the presence of Mary, a young Irish woman who we met in Switzerland at the CMLC course. She is helping out in the childcare for 3 months and is a real blessing to our family.



Celeste en Irene enjoying Songkran

## Monks



An enormous Buddha statue

There are times when we really realize why we are in Thailand. Lately, for example, when we drove around in the car. We saw a huge Buddha statue on a hill and curiously we went to take a look there. We arrived at a temple. Before the temple was a kind of square, with a central statue. This statue was the 'wheel of rebirth'. Around this statue were five boys of 6 years. They wore monk clothes. Silent, looking at the statue they stood there, meditating in the heat. Our hearts broke at the sight of these children. So useless, so hopeless. If they knew Jesus! And we realize that so many other children in this country have never heard the Gospel! We are grateful for our growing home front that makes our future work among Thai children possible. Family, friends, schools and the church who support us ... Great to know that we are supported by your prayers, fundraising actions and personal gifts and to get encouraging (e)mail...it makes us feel very humble.

In Him,

Mark & Anne-Marie, Celeste, Irene and David

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