

# DAY 1 Islam in Southeast Asia



The word “Islam” means “submission to God”. Islam is monotheistic, requiring submission to Allah, the one and only God.

Muslims believe that the revelation of Islam was given to Muhammad who is revered by Muslims as the greatest prophet. He was born in AD570 in Mecca and died in AD632 in Medina, Saudi Arabia. During the month of Ramadan, Muhammad would often retreat to a cave. During one of these times Muhammad began to receive a revelation that he believed was from the archangel Gabriel. These writings form the basis of the Qur’an, the central religious text of Islam. In addition to the Qur’an, there is the book of ‘Hadiths’. The Hadith is comprised of the teachings of Muhammad, and its practice is an important part of the life of a Muslim.

There are more than 130 distinct Muslim people groups in Southeast Asia, representing the largest unreached people groups in the world! Each group expresses Islam using its own language, traditions, and culture.

## How many Muslims are there in Southeast Asia?

Country	Population	Muslims	%
Indonesia	245,000,000	213,000,000	87%
Brunei	413,000	266,000	64%
Malaysia	29,000,000	16,000,000	55%
Singapore	5,200,000	911,000	18%
Thailand	70,000,000	5,800,000	8%
Philippines	96,000,000	4,500,000	5%
Myanmar	49,000,000	1,200,000	2%
Cambodia	14,000,000	235,000	2%
Vietnam	90,000,000	33,000	0.04%

For most Muslims, Islam is an essential part of their cultural identity. For instance, most Malays believe that “To be Malay is to be Muslim.” Religion is not a choice, and it is a fact of life.

Source: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

Over 200 million Muslims call Southeast Asia home; they represent 40% of its population and 20% of Muslims worldwide.

Most Muslims have never heard the story of Jesus Christ. The Qur’an says that Isa al Masih (Jesus the Messiah) was born of a virgin. Isa is one of the most highly respected figures in Islam. He has the power to perform miracles, even bringing food from the sky. He has the power to chase away evil spirits, heal diseases, and even raise dead people.

The devout Muslim tries to live his life by the five pillars of Islam:

1. Recite the creed, confessing that: “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.”
2. Offer ritual prayer 5 times a day, facing in the direction of Mecca.
3. Give at least 2.5% of his income to the poor.
4. Fast from dawn to sunset during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.
5. Visit Mecca at least once in his lifetime.

Most Muslims have been taught that Christians are misguided, immoral people, eating pork, sleeping around, worshipping three gods, and making war when God loves peace. They are convinced that the Bible has been corrupted and cannot be trusted.

Many barriers such as poverty, lack of education, government prohibitions, ethnic tensions, and social pressure keep Southeast Asia’s Muslims from hearing the Good News. Only God can overcome barriers like these. By praying, you play a vital role in God’s work in Southeast Asia.



## pray

- Pray that this people group will have chance to hear and receive the Good News.
- Pray for God to remove spiritual strongholds and spiritual blindness.
- Ask God for dreams and visions that will lead this people group to follow Jesus even when there are no other Jesus-followers around them.

# DAY 2 The Muslims of Thailand

The Muslims of Thailand come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. A large proportion of them are ethnic Malays. However, a number of other ethnic backgrounds are represented as well. They form about 8% to 10% of the nation's populace and number over 6.5 million.

Most Thai Muslims live in the southern region and are of Malay descent. The southern Muslims are broken into two main groups: the Malay-speaking Pattani people of the three most southern provinces, and the Pak Tai (southern Thai dialect) speakers of the remaining southern provinces. In addition to the Muslims in the south, there are significant Islamic communities in Bangkok, the nation's capital, and in the northern provinces of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai.



The Thai Muslims can be divided into 3 linguistic groups:

1. Those who speak the Pattani Malay dialect and use the Jawi/Arabic script. (This is the heart language of the three southernmost provinces.) (Most of them use Thai as well.)
2. Those who speak the southern Thai dialect.
3. Those who speak and read Thai, the national language.



In the table below, you will find data related to the various ethnic groups which comprise the Thai Muslim community as a whole; they, too, are people loved by God and yet still unreached.

People Groups	Population	Primary Language
Thai Islam, Central	2,627,000	Thai
Thai Islam, Southern	1,304,000	Thai, Southern
Malay, Pattani	1,051,000	Malay, Pattani
Malay, Melaju	724,000	Malay
Rohingya	77,000	Rohingya
Bengali	35,000	Bengali
Hui, Panthay	8,300	Chinese, Mandarin
Malay, Kedah	7,200	Malay, Kedah
Urdu	7,200	Urdu
Cham, Western, Tjam	4,600	Cham, Western
Turks	200	Turkish

Source: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)



pray

- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers to work among each of these people groups — granting them wisdom to know how to communicate the Gospel effectively within the people's cultural context.
- Pray that the Thai church will receive a burden to reach Thai Muslims in a way that is both culturally relevant and biblical.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of sin and revelation of the person of Isa al Masih to the Muslims of Thailand.



# DAY 3 Muslims in Bangkok



With 12 million residents, Bangkok is one of Southeast Asia's largest cities, and it is home to many Muslims.

Officially, 265,000 Muslims live in Bangkok, but the actual number may be closer to a million.

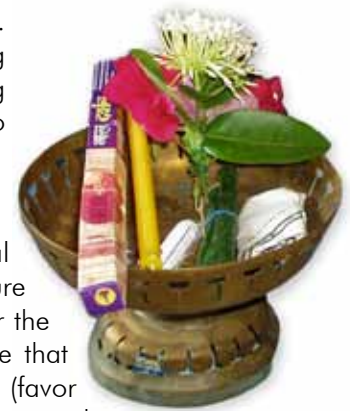
Bangkok's Muslims look to the local mosque to help them maintain their faith and customs in the face of a majority-Buddhist culture and the temptations of materialism. The mosque bonds the Muslim community together — a strong bond that makes it very rare that a Muslim would consider converting to Buddhism or Christianity.



The majority of Muslims in Bangkok practice Sunni Islam. While they observe Islamic practices strictly (e.g. fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day and enrolling their children in religious education), many still adhere to traditional animistic practices as well.



One of these practices is the ancestral feast and ritual held annually. Failure to do so can spell trouble for the family. The Muslims believe that invited guests gain merit (favor with God) by their presence and participation. The hosts also earn merit for their part in making merit for the dead and for providing food.



This is one worldview many Muslims in Bangkok hold. In journeying with them toward Jesus, it is like peeling away layer after layer of the onion in order to get to the core of their hearts. It takes time and perseverance and wisdom from God to know how to challenge these practices that go against the teachings of the One who sent us. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Eph 6:12)

## pray

- Pray that they will see the futility of their practices, lean on the righteousness of God through Christ, and walk out of their darkness into His marvellous Light.
- Fear of spirits dominates their lives and holds them captive. Ask God to let them experience His perfect love which drives out fear.
- Pray that eyes will open, ears will hear, and lame will walk. Ask the Lord to fill this dry and parched land with His Living Water and bring forth a highway of holiness. Pray using Isa 35:1-8.

# DAY 4 The Pattani Malays

The Pattani Malay people group is an ethnic community of devout Muslim people who are of Malay descent. They number about 3.5 million with 70% living in the southern provinces of Satun, Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, Songkhla, and Nakorn Sri Thammarat. An estimated 1 million of them are in Bangkok.

The provinces of the majority of the Pattani Malay are located a great distance from the center of the Thai government, and the Pattani Malay have developed a feeling of uniqueness and independence. However, each time the government tries to centralize control in their provinces, this independence is threatened. This has resulted in resentment toward the government.

There is a low rate of urbanization among Pattani Malays with only 12% of the population living in urban areas. Most of the Pattani Malay speak a dialect of Malay. In the village context, Thai is rarely spoken. Thai is used at school and when dealing with government officials or Thai Buddhists. Pattani Malay remains their heart language.



The Pattani Malay have a rich cultural heritage and highly skilled craftsmen. These skills can be shown in their colorful fishing boats called 'Korlae' and other handicrafts. Many of them earn their living by fishing, working in fish factories, tapping rubber, or farming vegetables or fruits. Generally, however, Muslims in southern Thailand earn less than the minimum wage. Many of them are caught in the poverty cycle of low income and high birth rates.

The number of children results in lack of education due to inadequate finances which then means that as young adults they are not able to get good jobs. This brings them back to the starting point of insufficient incomes.

The Pattani Malay generally live in close-knit communities, and social acceptance is important to them. Young people are increasingly influenced by TV and films though, and drug addiction and immorality are on the rise. The provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat have also recently been plagued by instability and violence which have



further undermined the quality of everyday life for the people who live there. Economic and political problems are found alongside environmental ones as well; this often undermines the Pattani Malay's traditional way of life. Pattani Malays live in a time of crisis. Throughout all the changes and crises the Pattani Malays have experienced recently, Islam has been a constant.

Unlike the majority of the population of Thailand who are Buddhist, the Pattani Malay are Muslim. They closely adhere to Islamic law, or sharia, which is taught in the traditional Islamic schools called pondoks. Due to their dedication to the Islamic faith, the Pattani Malay have a distinct identity in Thailand. Since the beginnings of the ancient Malay kingdom in Thailand, Islam has had a major influence on their culture.

## pray

- Ask for God's divine power that raises Jesus from death to break through the forces of darkness at work in the Muslim communities.
- Pray that more Pattani Malay will read and hear the story of Jesus; pray that their hearts will be touched as they read and listen and begin to experience God's power to meet their needs.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and favor to missions agencies and workers focusing on this people group.



# 5 Other Muslims of Thailand

The Muslims of Thailand also consist of various minority groups such as:

## The Burmese

Among the Muslims in Central Thailand, the Rohingya people, an ethnic group from Burma who practice Islam and speak Rohingya, are the largest and dominant Muslim group in Thailand.

## The Cham

These Muslims come from Cambodia and central Vietnam. They see themselves as a distinct group even though most of them speak Thai rather than their mother tongue. They can be found in the eastern coastal provinces and in Bangkok.

## The Chinese Muslims

Almost all the Chinese Muslims of Thailand belong to a group called Hui and can be found in the northern part of the country. Most of them speak Yunannese and Mandarin, as well as the northern dialect.

## The Indonesians

Because of their similar backgrounds, the Indonesians have assimilated into Thai Muslim communities in Bangkok and southern Thailand. They are mainly Javanese, Bawean, and Minangkabau.

## The Malay

Thai Malays is a term used to refer to ethnic Malays in Thailand. They tend to be rural people, and most are concentrated in the southern provinces of Thailand.



## The South Asians

This group consists of Bengalis, Punjabis, and Tamils from the countries of the Indian subcontinent. They can be found primarily in Central and Northern Thailand. There is also a South Asian community in Bangkok around the "Harun" mosque.

## The Urdu

Most of them are descendants of Arab, Turkish, Persian, and Pushtun immigrants. They can be found in every level of society. They are the illiterate and the educated, the poor and the money lenders, the landlords and the religious leaders.

## The West Asians

The people in this group are all Shiite Muslims. Iranians figure most prominently, but a much smaller community of Arabs is also spread throughout southern Thailand. Smaller groups of Pathans live in the south and in northeastern Thailand.

## pray

- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers to work among each of these people groups, and grant them wisdom to know how to communicate the Gospel effectively within the people's cultural contexts.
- Pray that the Thai church would receive a burden to reach Thai Muslims in a way that is both culturally relevant and biblical.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of sin and revelation of the person of Isa al Masih to the Muslims of Thailand.

# 6 Religious Leaders

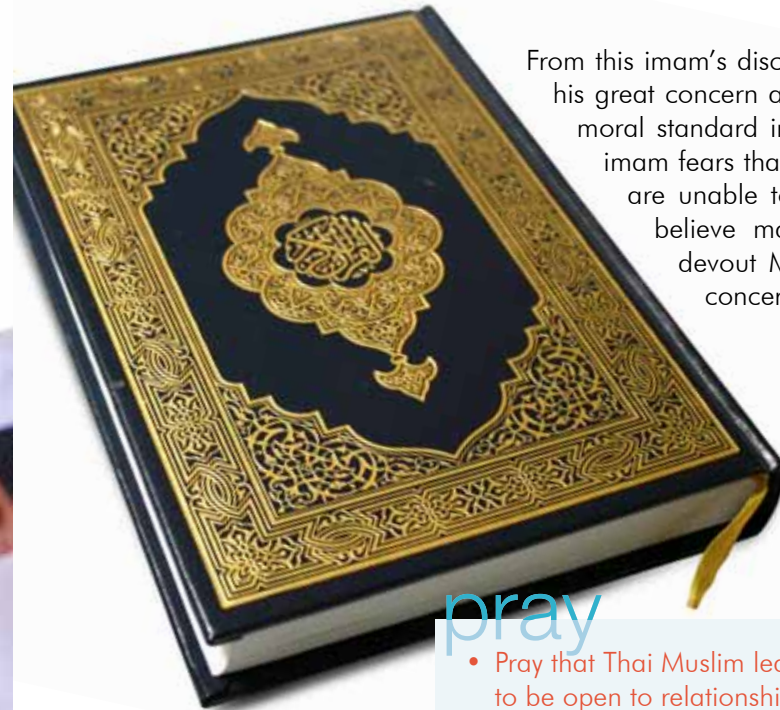
In most of the Muslim world the local leader of the mosque community is the imam. In different parts of the Islamic world the expectations for the role of an imam may vary, but in the context of the Malay world it is generally agreed that the duties of an imam include:

1. Religious duties at the mosque, such as prayer, teaching, and leadership meetings;
2. Social responsibilities, such as actively teaching about and living out the desired moral benchmark in his community.

One imam in southern Thailand shared, "Our community has many problems. My duty is to protect and prevent; my role is not to fix the problems...I have the responsibility to provide a prevention system. My role is teaching with the purpose to protect our community against bad morality... I enjoy helping other people. I look after the welfare in the village, visit the sick, take neighbors out when they can't go by themselves, and I help with many family conflicts."

Some of the many problems mentioned by the imam are:

1. People losing their devoutness to the truths of Islam
2. People in the village are following in the ways of decline of morality
3. People are selfish and no longer contribute to society
4. Children do not listen to and respect their parents
5. Parents have little interest in sending their children to Islamic school
6. Many children have problems with drugs



From this imam's disclosures we could sense his great concern about the decline of the moral standard in his community. If this imam fears that the teachings of Islam are unable to stop this decline, we believe many more sincere and devout Muslims carry the same concern.

pray

- Pray that Thai Muslim leaders will continue to be open to relationships and dialog with Christian workers.
- Pray that Thai Muslim leaders will come to realize that relying on their cultural prevention system will not work and that they will start seeking God.
- Pray that the words and actions of the workers among the Muslims of Thailand will be a true reflection of the love that Christ has for them.



# DAY 7

## Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Every day during this month, Muslims all over the world abstain from food, drink, and meeting other physical needs during the daylight hours. Muslims fast as an act of faith and worship toward Allah, seeking to suppress their desires and to increase their spiritual piety. They use this time to practice self-restraint: cleansing their bodies and souls from impurities and re-focusing on the worship of God.

This annual observance is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, one of the highest forms of Islamic worship. According to numerous biographical accounts compiled in hadiths (a traditional account of things said or done by Muhammad or his companions), the month lasts 29–30 days based on the visual sightings of the crescent moon. Fasting is obligatory for adult Muslims except those who are ill, traveling, or going through menstrual bleeding.

Though fasting is mandatory only for adults, children as young as eight willingly observe fasting with their elders. Children look forward to the excitement of sighting the moon and eating special meals with their families.



The fast is broken at sunset. The prophet Muhammad recommended breaking the fast with dates. Muslims are urged to invite others to break the fast with them. These gatherings are called Iftar parties.



After 30 days of fasting, the end of the month of Ramadan is observed with a day of celebration called Eid-ul-Fitr. On this day, Muslims gather in one place to offer a prayer of thanks. It is traditional to wear new clothes, visit friends and relatives, exchange gifts, eat delicious dishes prepared for this occasion, and wait patiently for the next year.

### pray

- Pray that Muslims will understand that God desires for everyone to know Him as His children and not as slaves according to their belief of God.
- Pray that the Muslim will be convicted of sin, know true repentance, accept Jesus, and experience God's forgiveness.
- For those who want to love and follow God, please pray for their protection, that they will engage in a relationship with God, and that they will learn to fast in a way that truly honors God.

# DAY 8 Folk Islam

One day a friend brought me to his cousin's house and asked me to pray for his sickly cousin. The boy was in the final stage of cancer. In addition to visiting the hospital, he had seen several types of magic practitioners, ranging from a Muslim bomoh (shaman) to Buddhist monks. As a last resort, the *farang* follower of Isa al Masih (white follower of Jesus the Messiah), that's me, was called in to pray for him.

As I knelt to pray by the bed in the dark room where the still body of the boy lay, the boy turned his back to me. I felt that he wanted me to leave him alone, but I didn't know enough Thai to speak to him. A couple of days later I learned that the boy was dead.

Folk Islam is a term used to describe the form of Islam that incorporates native animistic beliefs and practices. These practices and beliefs rely upon traditional magic and rituals that call upon the supernatural world. The spirit doctors or bomohs use shrines and amulets, the veneration of saints and ancestors, and mix older animistic traditions with Islamic beliefs. Although these forms of Islam are practices among most of the southern Thai Muslims, the stricter forms of Islam, with influences from the Middle East, disprove of the traditional folk Islamic practices. This difference between purer forms of Islam and traditional folk Islam is the cause of tension in many areas.



Different varieties of folk Islam are found to be well established and have a pervasive effect on village affairs. Presumably one reason for the popularity of folk Islam is that its values and beliefs directly impinge upon the individual villager's daily life, and the reality of the supernatural world. While the orthodox tradition of Islam, which is based upon complex legalistic, scriptural doctrines, is incomprehensible to most lower educated rural farmers and fishermen, folk Islam is both directly appealing and tangible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Article: *Islamic reformism In Thailand* by Raymond Scupin, Professor of Anthropology and International Studies, Lindenwood University, USA



## pray

- Pray that Muslims will encounter the true power of God through the prayers of His people.
- Pray that Christians will have more opportunities to pray with their Muslim friends and acquaintances.
- Pray that Christians will be faithful witnesses for Christ by praying with Muslims whenever the opportunity presents itself.



# 9 DAY Worldview

"I am a Muslim and so is my family. It would be very difficult for me to become a follower of Isa," my student once said as I started to share with him about Isa (Jesus).

One of the cultural themes of Muslims is peace or harmony. They have the desire to be in agreement, or at least to avoid open discord, in every area of their lives. Peace to them means being in harmony with God and other people. Thus, pleasing God with good works and a life in submission to His laws (Shariah) is a daily priority. Maintaining good relationships is done by keeping strict moral etiquette and honoring the unwritten rules of the community. Change is not a positive value among people who regard harmony as supreme because change challenges the individual and the community.



Disharmony in the community is a threat to all. Harmony breakers are disciplined by silence, ridicule or exile. Islam with its common beliefs and practices is a safeguard against the things that oppose God's will for the people. Walking according to God's laws brings security, morality and peace to the community. Individuals or groups who deviate from the religious norm threaten the peace, behave in sinful ways toward God and bring shame to the community. Thus, the community frowns very seriously at anyone who follows God in ways that are opposed to the religious norm.

If an individual decides to follow Jesus, his/her decision threatens the very core of the family's and the community's harmony, and this person is perceived to shame and oppose God's ways for the community. The individual's family must do everything within its influence (which includes occult power and violence) to get the person to recant. If they are unsuccessful, then the person could be expelled from the community or even be in danger of physical harm.



## pray

- Pray for God to grant wisdom and boldness for workers to share Christ with their Muslim friends and neighbors.
- Pray for strength and faith for those who have already decided to follow Jesus.
- Pray for workers to have wisdom in ministering to and encouraging the local believers.

# DAY 10 Pondok School



Islamic religious schools are widespread throughout the Muslim world. They include the Pesantren (religious boarding schools) in Indonesia and its rough equivalent in Malaysia and Thailand called the pondok.

Thailand's southern Muslims have always had their pondoks as an integral part of their lives. The pondok has been a symbol of their Malay-Muslim identity for many years. The pondoks serve the local villages of the southern Islamic community.

In the pondok tradition, teaching is done in Malay and Arabic, and the emphasis is on religious learning. There is no system of assessment in place; hence, these schools are not accredited by the government. The tok gurus (religious teachers) are the supreme heads of the schools.

The students at these schools learn to recite the Qur'an in basic Arabic language. They also study about Fiqh (how to fast and pray), Usuluddin (about God) and Tasawwuf (how to get closer to God). When the young people in the Muslim community get into trouble, they are sent to a pondok to be straightened out.

The word "pondok" comes from the Arabic word for the hostels that students stay and study in. There are well over 500 Pondok in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand, but these come in many shapes and sizes. Over the last fifty years, many pondoks have been registered with the government and renamed as private Islamic schools which means they are now required to teach the standard Thai curriculum alongside Islamic subjects. This is but one example of how the changing world is forcing pondoks to change. However, there is no sign of pondoks disappearing.

Many young people are sent to study at pondoks. Sometimes gaps exist between the answers they are taught and the questions they have raised. Whenever this sort of gap exists, questions regarding the relevance of these schools arise.



## pray

- Pray that the young ones who are studying in pondoks will be sincere seekers after the Truth.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide all those who struggle with modern day questions to seek God.
- Pray for divine opportunity for these young ones to hear the story of Jesus and know His love for them.



# DAY 11 Muslim Marriages

To get married in the Islamic tradition, both the man and woman must be of the Islamic faith. Should one of them not be a Muslim, he/she would need to convert and be ordained into the Islamic faith in the mosque. The imam would officiate that person's declaration of his/her belief in the one God revealed through the teaching of Prophet Muhammad.



In Islam, polygamy is allowed with the specific limitation that a man can have up to four wives at any one time. Islamic scholars state that the husband must tell the first wife if he wants to marry another, but he does not have to have permission from his first wife. Women, on the other hand, are only allowed to marry one husband. They are allowed to remarry after a divorce though.

"Will I be the only wife of this man? I hope he asks my permission if he wants to get a second wife." Many Muslim wives will have such questions come to their minds, but in their culture, they are taught to accept this as the fate of being a woman.

The story of a good friend of ours in the village illustrates the hardship that many Muslim women face. Not long after Naa came to terms with the death of her daughter, she found out that her husband had another daughter from a mistress. Her husband took all their property and moved in with his mistress. This caused her to have tremendous hate for her husband. She wanted to kill him despite us telling her that she must learn to forgive.



One day when we were teaching her about moral values, we told her about God's greatest commandment: "Love your God with all of your heart and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

When she heard this verse, tears began to flow from her eyes. She cried bitterly as if releasing all the heaviness in her heart. She has since released and forgiven her husband. We have started sharing with her about our Savior, and we can see the change in her life.

## pray

- Pray for the Muslim women who are abandoned by their husbands; pray that God will reveal Himself and His unconditional love for them.
- Pray for the children of these broken marriages; pray that their hearts will be open to receive the perfect love that comes only from the Heavenly Father.
- Pray for the workers' families; pray that their marriages and relationships will truly model Christ's love.

# DAY 12 Women

Muslim women living in the insurgency-plagued southern region of Thailand face great challenges. The problem of ethnic unrest remains at the forefront. They also face problems of discrimination under state and religious law. Finally, they deal with the demands of cultural norms that are exceedingly difficult to address.

Many of these Muslim women have lost their husbands or other family members who have been killed in the fighting between members of the insurgency and the Thai military. They are left alone to fend for themselves and their families. This is no easy task for them as rural Muslim women usually stay at home. They have not experienced being the head of their families, and now suddenly they have to become the breadwinners.

A Muslim woman widowed as a result of insurgency-related violence will not get the full 300,000 baht (10,000 USD) that government assistance provides to widows. Religious elders see this as inheritance and divide the money among her relatives.



More than 70 percent of the population in southernmost Thailand are ethnic Malay Muslims. A Muslim Attorney Centre provides free legal help to males, but there are no law firms specializing in women's rights.

The Islamic laws on inheritance, divorce, and polygamy, which favor men, leave wives in the Muslim-majority southern provinces with mounting debts when their husbands die or leave them for other women.

Domestic violence is common in these southern areas, but women find themselves unable to get help because religious leaders and social tradition consider it a private matter. It is viewed as an internal problem, and "...a good woman will not talk about it." The same holds true for women living with HIV/AIDS. Regardless of how they were infected, they are seen as sinful. As a result, many women do not seek treatment from the public health system for fear of being ostracized.



## pray

- Pray for women struggling with life; pray that they will meet Jesus who is the comforter, healer, and burden bearer.
- Pray for women who are single, divorced, or in unhappy marriages; pray that they will come to know Jesus as their best friend.
- Pray for women who are fearful of evil spirits; pray that they will experience the power that Jesus has over evil.



# DAY 13 Youth

A small group of volunteer teachers at a Muslim-owned technological school in Bangkok were told that half of the student population was Muslim. Rejoicing at this opportunity, they looked forward to the first school assembly on Monday morning. To their surprise, none of the young ladies wore coverings on their heads, but all of them were wearing skimpy skirts. The casual response they received from the teacher when they asked about this was that while they had many female Muslim students, no one wore head coverings.

While at their English Corner during the students' break time, they noticed a commotion at the school gate. They later learned that one of the students in the school had been shot by a gang member from another school. "This is a normal happening here. I used to be scared about these shootings as well but not anymore," one of the teachers shared.



Another group of volunteers made themselves available to a youth detention center — teaching English to the youth and also teaching life skills that could be used when they were released from the Center.

From their interaction with the youth, the volunteers found that most of them were from poor families in which their parents couldn't afford to send them to school. When asked why they had been sent to the center, a group consisting of brothers and a cousin confessed that they had gang-raped a girl in their village. Another young man said that he had helped drug traffickers to smuggle drugs between Thailand and Malaysia. Some had been caught taking drugs, and others were there because they had been arrested for theft.

## pray

- Pray that poor students have the chance to get a good education.
- Pray that young people will find meaningful recreation/relaxation activities that will help to keep them from boredom, drugs, and bad influences.
- Pray for workers to have wisdom and insight in dealing with financial requests; pray that they will be able to give adequate help to the poor and needy families.

# DAY 14 Young Children

We rejoice with the workers when we receive news from them such as:

- Praise God for sustaining us in running the monthly English Program in the English Language Center teaching 28 children from ages 6 to 12 years old.
- Praise God for the 26 boys in the orphanage who have been responding well since we started sharing Bible stories as part of the English lessons and started praying with them.
- Praise God for open doors for us to start teaching the elementary and high school students beginning next month in addition to our regular teaching at another Muslim Community Center.
- Praise the Lord for a fruitful year! 6 out of the 13 Muslim children we take care of received Christ as their personal Savior in April this year. Once a week we have fellowship, read the Bible, sing worship songs, and pray with them. As time passes I can see them growing spiritually and in knowing how to pray themselves in the name of Isa al Masih (Jesus the Messiah).
- Thank God for the successful run of the block Christmas Party for 200 families and many children near the slum area.



However, there are many children out there who are less fortunate than those mentioned above. We often hear such sad news:

UN Bangkok, Dec 12, 2012 (AFP)  
Near daily attacks—including shootings, bombings and even beheadings—mean violence is a part of life for many in Thailand's Muslim-majority southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala. More than 5,300 people, both Buddhist and Muslim, have been killed since the unrest reignited in 2004. This has left many children to be orphans or to live in broken families.

PATTANI, Dec 3, 2012 (AFP)  
Trauma continues to haunt Thailand's children of war and violence. Mentally-scarred and afraid to set foot outside his home in Thailand's deep south, Ahmad is one of thousands of children orphaned by a war largely forgotten by the rest of the world. After years living with the menace of bombs, shootings, and curfews, many youngsters in Thailand's insurgency-wrecked deep south are exhibiting high levels of stress and trauma. "When I do go out I stay near my home . . . I never go far away," Ahmad, 12, said as he chewed timidly on the collar of his football shirt. His 15-year-old sister, Sunnah, said their father's murder by unknown gunmen six years ago marked the end of her childhood and left the siblings without parents following the death of their mother in an accident. They now live with an aunt.



pray

- Pray that the Lord will protect the soul of these young ones, and grant them opportunity to hear the Gospel.
- Pray that sincere efforts would be made by the authorities to find solutions to stop the violence.
- Pray that God will bind the spirit of violence among the people especially those in south Thailand.



**Fai**

We helped Fai prepare her university application and rejoiced with her in being accepted as a scholar, but the situation turned sour when she began her studies on campus. The university where she had been accepted was a prestigious school, and many of the students were from well-to-do families. They looked down on her and were not willing to befriend her because she is a Muslim. They even labelled her as poor and illiterate. She would call us at night and express her feelings of isolation and hurt. We would share with her and bring her comfort by telling her that she was being loved and accepted by God just as she was since the Mighty Creator knitted her in her mother's womb.

**Ruslan**

Ruslan is a 22-year-old Muslim man studying English liberal arts at Yala Rajabhat University. During his studies, he hears about God's love from some people, and his Christian English teachers have conversations with him about God's love. As he is determined to learn and speak English well, he continues to have such conversations with his English teachers.

**Ronald**

Ronald plans to open a religious school in his village when he graduates from his studies. Recently he met a Christian on campus and listened to his testimony. The Christian's confidence in sharing his testimony made Ronald confused. He had dedicated himself to Allah, but he realized he did not have such confidence. He is struggling to understand who Isa (Jesus) is.

**Anne**

Anne is studying English at a university in a big city. She recently met a young man named Brian, and they are now going on dates. They hold hands when there are no people watching them. She knows this is not right according to their religious teaching, but other Muslim friends tell her it is okay. She thinks it should be in secret; if not, her parents will be so disappointed.



Many Muslim students are trying to keep their Islamic lifestyle on campus, but more Muslim students are undergoing changes in their worldview and lifestyle. They love their religion and culture, but they also want to adjust to the secular culture.

They are in transition so they are more open to new things. Some of them are waiting to hear the Gospel. The door is open, but those who use this opportunity are few.

## pray

- Pray for more Christians to come and work among the Muslim students.
- Pray for Christian students to be bold in sharing God's love. Many of them are afraid of Muslims.
- Pray for the development of appropriate approaches and materials to be used with Muslim students.

# DAY 16 Removing Obstacles

Nur is one of those students from whom you can really see the passion to learn English. She likes it so much that she will go to great lengths just to be with foreigners. What makes her story unique is not her success in learning but how she came to like English in the first place.

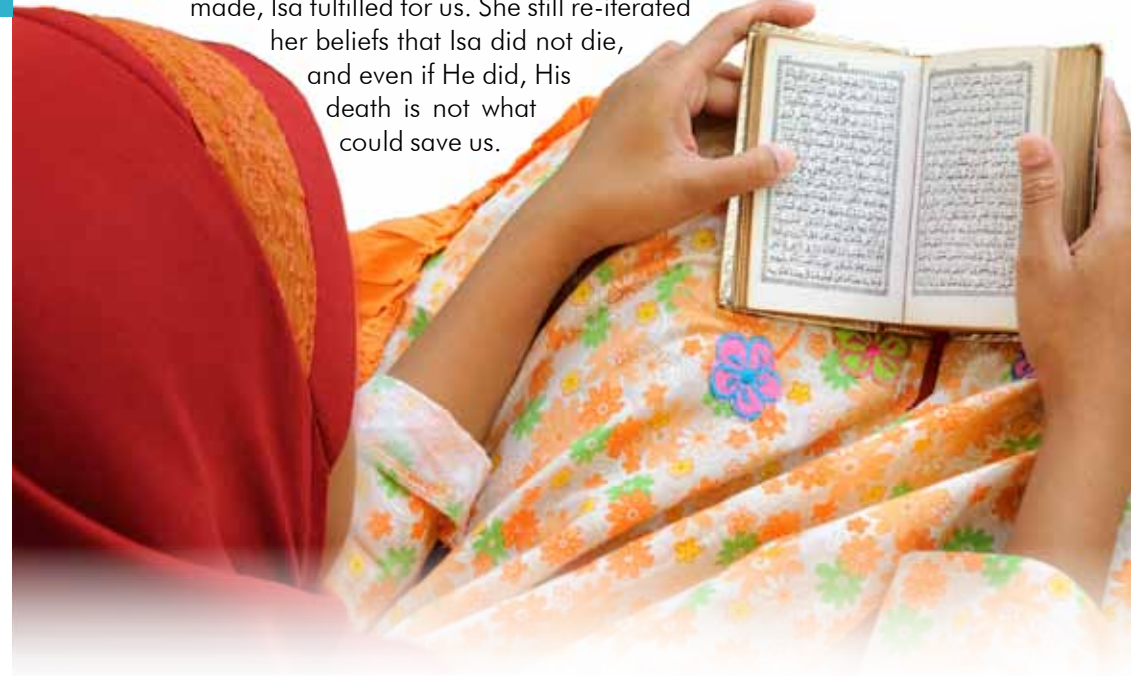
In her own words, she would tell the story of how a missionary once came to her village when she was young. Since then she has been interested in learning the language.

In her university years, Nur was constantly exposed to God's workers. An English lecturer in university with whom she had gotten close boldly shared the Gospel with her.

Despite the tough challenges growing up as an orphan, she graduated from university and obtained work in a major tourist spot in the country.



The day before she left, we caught up with her and shared with her about the holiness of God and how no amount of good works can bridge the gap between God and us. We further explained that the sacrifices that the prophets made, Isa fulfilled for us. She still re-iterated her beliefs that Isa did not die, and even if He did, His death is not what could save us.



Many of those who have heard the Gospel like Nur struggle in their hearts, asking, "Do I really want to find out more about Isa, only to be called a Christian later?" "Will I need to go to church? I can't do that!" "Do I have to sit on chairs and eat unclean food?" And the list goes on.

## pray

- Pray for workers to have wisdom to share the Gospel in the context of Thai Muslims.
- Pray that many more Thai Muslims will have a chance to hear and understand what it means to follow Jesus where they live.
- Pray that the seed of the word of God will fall on fruitful ground in the lives of many Thai Muslims.



# DAY 17

## Unrest in South Thailand

The communities in the southernmost provinces of Thailand (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) have been plagued by much pain and suffering in the past nine years. More than 5,000 people have been killed since an Islamist insurgency flared in January 2004. Most attacks are small-scale bombings or drive-by shootings that target soldiers, police, and symbols of authority, but suspected insurgents have also staged large attacks in commercial areas. Listed below are some of the recent attacks:

a) On 24 September 2012, suspected Muslim insurgents detonated a small bomb at a shelter at the entrance of a public school in Narathiwat province's Bacho district while the school was holding a meeting of school directors from surrounding villages. Two principals and two soldiers were wounded.

b) On 21 September 2012, a bomb went off after gunmen opened fire at a gold shop in Sai Buri district, Pattani province, drawing in onlookers; at least six people were killed, and 40 others were injured by the bomb explosion.



c) On 31 August 2012, insurgents staged 102 violent incidents, including five bomb attacks that wounded six security officials, in the deep south. They were timed to coincide with Malaysia's independence day for symbolic effect. Thai flags were burned, and Malaysian flags were displayed prominently along roads and on electricity poles, trees, and pedestrian bridges in the southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, as well as predominantly Buddhist Songkhla province. Of the 102 incidents, 34 occurred in Yala, 44 in Narathiwat, 12 in Pattani and 12 in Songkhla.

d) On 20 July 2012, a car bomb attack, believed to be set off by suspected insurgents in front of a computer shop in the Thai-Malaysian border district of Sungai Kolok, Narathiwat province, caused commercial buildings to burn and wounded eight residents.

e) On 31 March 2012, a midday explosion at the 405-room Lee Gardens Plaza Hotel, where throngs of Malaysian and Singaporean tourists spend their weekends, killed three people and caused about 230 injuries, mostly from smoke inhalation. The same hotel was targeted in 2006, when four people, including a Canadian man, were killed by six bombs that had been planted on Hat Yai's main street. At approximately the same time, at least 10 people were killed in three explosions in the commercial district of Yala. In another incident, suspected militants detonated a motorcycle bomb 50 meters from a local police station in Pattani province's Mae Lan district, wounding one police officer.



Since 2005 a state of emergency has been imposed by Thai authorities that gives security forces special powers to arrest and detain suspects in the three restive provinces. However, the decree and a massive security presence have failed to curb the violence, and little is known about the militants or their goals.

## pray

- Pray for peace for the region, for understanding in the community, and for sensitive government policies.
- Pray that the influences of evil would be restrained.
- Pray for the believers in the area to reach out to share Jesus with their neighbors.

# DAY 18 The Funeral

A teenage boy was with a group of friends and a cross-cultural worker having fun at the swimming pool. Tragedy occurred when he drowned in the pool. As the mother looked at her son's lifeless body, there were tears in her eyes, but she struggled hard not to cry. She could not cry aloud nor could she complain or demand explanation. She was silently sad and could only accept the fate of her son. In the Muslim belief system, when a person dies it is the will of Allah to take the life, and everyone has to accept it.

In the house, many friends and relatives were there to sympathize with the family. While the cross-cultural worker was ready to be blamed, to be harmed, or to be sued by the family of the boy, they did none of that. Instead the worker was welcomed by the family and introduced to the relatives.

The body was wrapped in white cloths with the face covered; then it was laid on the mat. While people were talking about what had happened, the mother kept herself close to her son's body, looking, and keeping herself from shedding any tears.

The following day was the funeral. In their belief system, only the men are permitted to go to the cemetery to bury the dead. Women are not allowed for they might defile the holy cemetery grounds. When the funeral was finished, the mother, together with other women, went to take a look.



Some days later, the cross-cultural worker and his wife visited the family. They could see his parents were still grieving. The father of the boy shared with the couple that they were waiting for their son to appear to them in their dreams so that he could tell them the how and why of his death.

During the visit, the couple shared with them about Jesus. The mother of the boy said they knew Jesus from the Qur'an, and they were open to share and hear more from the workers.

## pray

- Pray that many Muslims in Thailand will be hungry for the assurance of salvation.
- Pray that during funerals, they will ask deep questions about life and eternity.
- Pray that Jesus will appear to them in their dreams; pray that they will know and believe there is life in Jesus.





# 19 The Flood



The rainy season in Thailand varies from region to region and is largely dominated by the monsoon. Very broadly speaking, Thailand's rainy season can be classified as May/June to October. For most of Thailand, the wettest months are usually August to October. However, the Gulf Coast of the southern peninsula (e.g. Ko Samui, Ko Pha Ngan) is affected by the southwest monsoon which can lead to heavy rainfall in November and the beginning of December.

In 2011, Thailand experienced the worst floods in decades. These floods left millions of acres of land under water. Some 60 of the country's 77 provinces and approximately eight million people were affected. The flood has also severely affected the nation's economy. World Bank estimated the damages resulting from the flood to amount to US\$45 billion. In domestic currency terms Thai economy suffered a loss of about 1,440 billion Thai baht, making the natural calamity the fourth costliest in history.



While the flood in 2011 is extraordinary, several parts of Thailand are at risk of flooding every year during the rainy seasons. In Bangkok, the majority of Muslims live along the canals and in low-lying areas. As such, with heavy downpours, when the canals cannot cope with the overflow of water, families living in low-lying areas get water in their homes.

In the south, fishermen are prevented from going out in the seas during the monsoon season, and this also affects their livelihood.

pray

- Pray for good flood control measures to be in place during the rainy and monsoon seasons.
- Pray for protection from dengue fever as this is prevalent in the rainy season.
- Pray for wisdom for workers who may have friends affected by flooding during the rainy season to be ready to help in appropriate ways.



# 20 Dreams & Visions

*Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.*

*Acts 2:17*

She found herself in an open field. There was nothing much special in this scenery, but she felt peace in her heart, the kind of peace that she had never felt. It seemed like she had been in this field before, and somehow she knew what was going to happen next. Suddenly, there appeared before her a bright light. She wasn't startled when she saw the figure. It was a man wearing a white robe that seemed to shine. Immense joy and love flooded her heart when she saw the figure. She immediately knew that this was Jesus appearing to her. And then she woke up.

This was exactly the same dream that Fa had had when she was fifteen years old. "Why is this dream being repeated again?" she asked herself. Although she was not sure of the answer, she knew that it had something to do with what the strangers had shared with her a few days back.

It was Fa's first year at the University. One day all her friends were busy when meal time came, so she was left eating alone at the canteen. A couple of teenagers approached her. They didn't look Thai, and when they spoke in English she knew that they were foreigners. They told her that they were in Thailand for a visit and wanted to invite her to a student activity. After a few minutes of chit chat, they shared with her about Jesus. Then she remembered her dream from when she was fifteen years old. Was this the same Jesus who appeared to her at that time? Was this the same Jesus that she believed to be a prophet?

Many questions occupied her mind. Now that she had seen Jesus in her dreams for the second time, she had to find out more about him. She had to know the truth. The foreign students told her where to go if she wanted to know more about Jesus, and that was where she would go after her classes in the afternoon.

## pray

- Pray for God to pour out His Spirit to many of the unreached and enable them to see visions and dream dreams of Jesus.
- Pray that the unreached will have the heart desire to find out more about Jesus.
- Pray for believers to have the courage and boldness to share about Jesus.



# 21

## Divine Appointment

I met Lan near the railway station when my car happened to break down because of the flood. He offered to find some of his friends to help, but it was almost midnight. After much pleading, he agreed to take me home in his car. It was less than five minutes before we reached my home where the flood waters from the rising river were also running. Lan's car was struggling to make it through.



I asked him to turn the car back, but he said it was too late. He kept on driving, and the flood water started to come inside the car. I was so scared, and I began to cry out to Jesus. The car dragged on for some time. Finally we managed to reach the junction of the road, which is on slightly higher ground, where he stopped the car to let water out of it.

"I pressed hard, but the car seemed to lose all its power," Lan started talking to me when we were out of the car.

"However, I felt that someone was pushing the car from behind. I knew you were praying though I don't know exactly what you were praying. Maybe because I helped you, Allah heard your prayer and helped us. Maybe Allah has a special plan for us so that we can be friends."

That night he slept at my house, and he shared with me the story of his family. He has eleven brothers and sisters, and three of them were born deaf. They believe it was caused by the curse of a snake which touched their mother's tongue when she was sleeping with her mouth open during her pregnancy. He also has a hyperactive son who has caused big trouble for the family.

The next day when we were having breakfast at a nearby coffee shop, he shared last night's miracle with everyone there.

## pray

- Pray for wisdom to share the stories of Jesus when such divine appointment avails opportunities to the workers.
- Pray that Christians in the Muslim community will show the qualities of salt and light so that the people will be attracted to them and make friends with them.
- Pray that believers will stand united as one body of Christ and have the eagerness to share Christ's love with their neighbors.

# DAY 22 Radio & Correspondence



Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) produces daily programming in two languages aired through 40 government AM/FM and local community stations in 33 provinces throughout Thailand. Most programs, which are culturally suited to their audiences, run one half hour a day for a total of 546 hours per month. They are produced by a variety of programmers. Additionally, a small, community, two frequency 'FEB-radio' station

located in Bangkok offers 480 hours of programming per month.

FEBC Thailand engages listeners in both rural and urban areas to help them discover the love of the living God. The ministry's goal is to help people know that God is real and that Jesus brings hope and eternal life. In addition to providing encouragement and growth opportunities for scattered believers, radio is an integral part of church planting ministries. Often, many of our listeners are oral people without written Scripture. Many of these listeners are persecuted for their faith.



Read one of their many encouraging stories on the following page.



## *She Wanted the Same Love*

When Amira called our live call-in radio program, she was crying. She told us that she wanted to rebel against her parents, and then she hung up the phone. Once the program was over, one of our staff members called Amira and asked for more information. Amira shared that her parents were forcing her to marry her cousin. While her cousin seemed content with the arrangement, she did not feel the same and felt pressured by her parents.

Our staff suggested to her that she contact her cousin and explain the situation. The call ended with our staff member assuring Amira that she would be praying for her. Later Amira called back and told her that the cousin respected her decision and would help her speak to her family. She thanked our staff member for her advice and said, "I feel like I have hope again. I didn't know prayer had such power," she added. "Thank you for praying for me. I'm sure God spoke to my cousin to help me end this ordeal."

Before hanging up, Amira asked if she could visit the station to meet the other team members. She explained, "I feel such extraordinary love from you, and I want that same love myself."

Source: [www.febc.org](http://www.febc.org)



## pray

- Pray for wisdom in developing relevant radio programs and in responding to callers.
- Pray that many will have the opportunity to tune in to the Christian radio broadcasts.
- Pray for open hearts for radio listeners that the seeds sown may grow and bear fruit.



# DAY 23 Teaching English

The sun was burning hot at 11 o'clock in the morning, but one by one they came. Their eyes glistened with excitement. The boys came running wearing the white 'songkok', while the girls chatted gaily as they came wearing their own head coverings. They all carried notebooks and books as they were just coming from their religious classes. Some of the children were 'well-dressed' since they had just come from their classes; the younger ones were wearing grubby clothes as they had just come from home. The little ones also came tagging along with their mothers.

Every Saturday, they regularly come to learn English with us in the village. Their joy is contagious every time they sing songs, play games, and learn with us. They sing songs like:



*"...Who put the hope in the hope, hope hope?  
Who put the love in the love, love, love?"*

*Who is this Man?  
I want to shake His hand 'cause He gave His life to me..."*

Oh, how we long for them to truly know the Man who gave His life to them. How we long for their joy to be more than the joy of singing songs, learning English, and having fun; we yearn for them to have the real JOY of knowing there is the God who loves them so much and gives them eternal life. How we long for the time to come when we will be teaching them not only English but also teaching them the way to the Father. These kids are just so precious in the eyes of God.



Teaching English is one of the many ways for our workers to reach out to the Muslim communities, especially their next generation.

## pray

- Pray that God will supply adequate teachers and resources to meet the needs of each community.
- Pray for good relationships between the teachers and students, and pray for opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Pray for good relationships between the teachers and parents so that they will keep bringing/ allowing their children to attend our English classes.

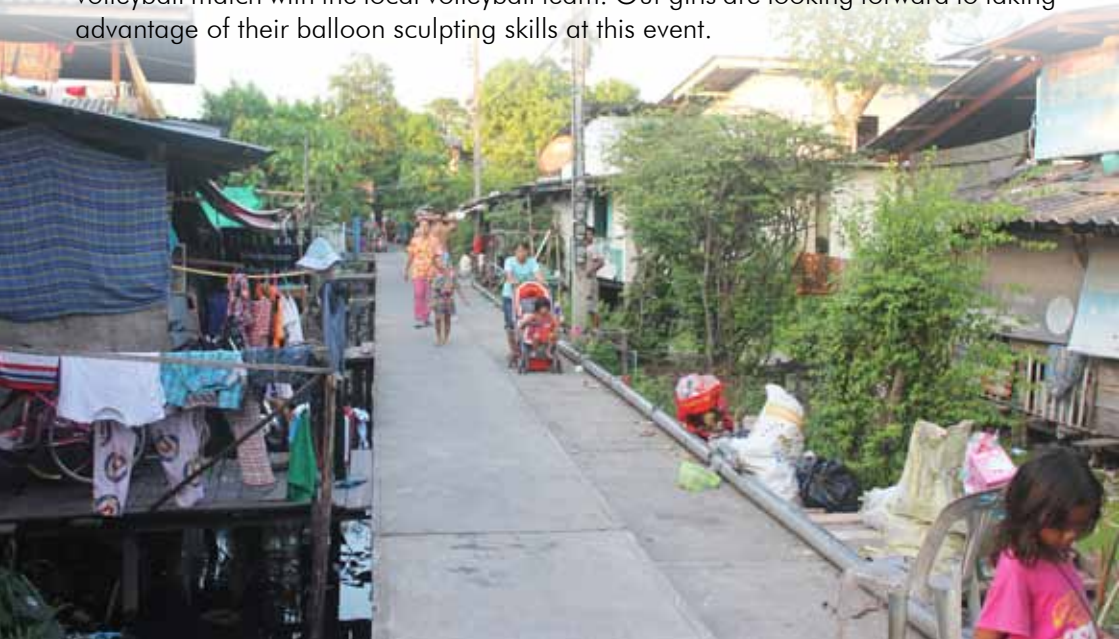
# DAY 24 Community Development

Due to the security needs and sensitivity of our workers and local believers, it is important for them to build relationships with Muslims and gain their trust and friendship before sharing the Gospel with them. One of the ways to reach out to them is through community development activities. Listed below are some of the activities our workers are involved in:

## Community Event

5<sup>th</sup> December is the King's Birthday. In Thailand, we celebrate this day as "Father's Day". Thais are encouraged to wear yellow on this day as King Bhumibol Adulyadej was born on a Monday. In Thailand, a particular color is associated with each day of the week, and yellow is the color for Monday. Our team decks out in yellow as we join the celebration.

We have been invited to participate in one of the Muslim community events and are thankful for the favor God has given us with this people group. We will be running several activity booths including one which teaches about dengue (a mosquito borne illness) prevention through games and quizzes and another which teaches cup stacking where a mini competition will be held. Some of our team members will be joining the volleyball match with the local volleyball team. Our girls are looking forward to taking advantage of their balloon sculpting skills at this event.



## Awareness Workshop

We praise the Lord for the opportunity to enter a new Muslim community with 45 households to run a Dengue Awareness workshop. We will be making mosquito repellent with them.

## Language Introduction

Thanks to a team of three Chinese volunteers, we are able to run the "Fun with Chinese" program through songs and games in one of the Muslim communities.



## Sports

We have been coaching a team of boys to play futsal so that they can participate in their interschool friendly match. The school director of another Muslim school with about 300 students is keen to invite us to run our Sport Stacking Project as an after-school program to help develop self-confidence in the children.



We need volunteers who can teach English, coach sports (especially futsal or soccer), or teach a special skill such as baking, sewing, or craft making. They would need to enjoy ministry with children and young adults and also enjoy learning a new culture and language.

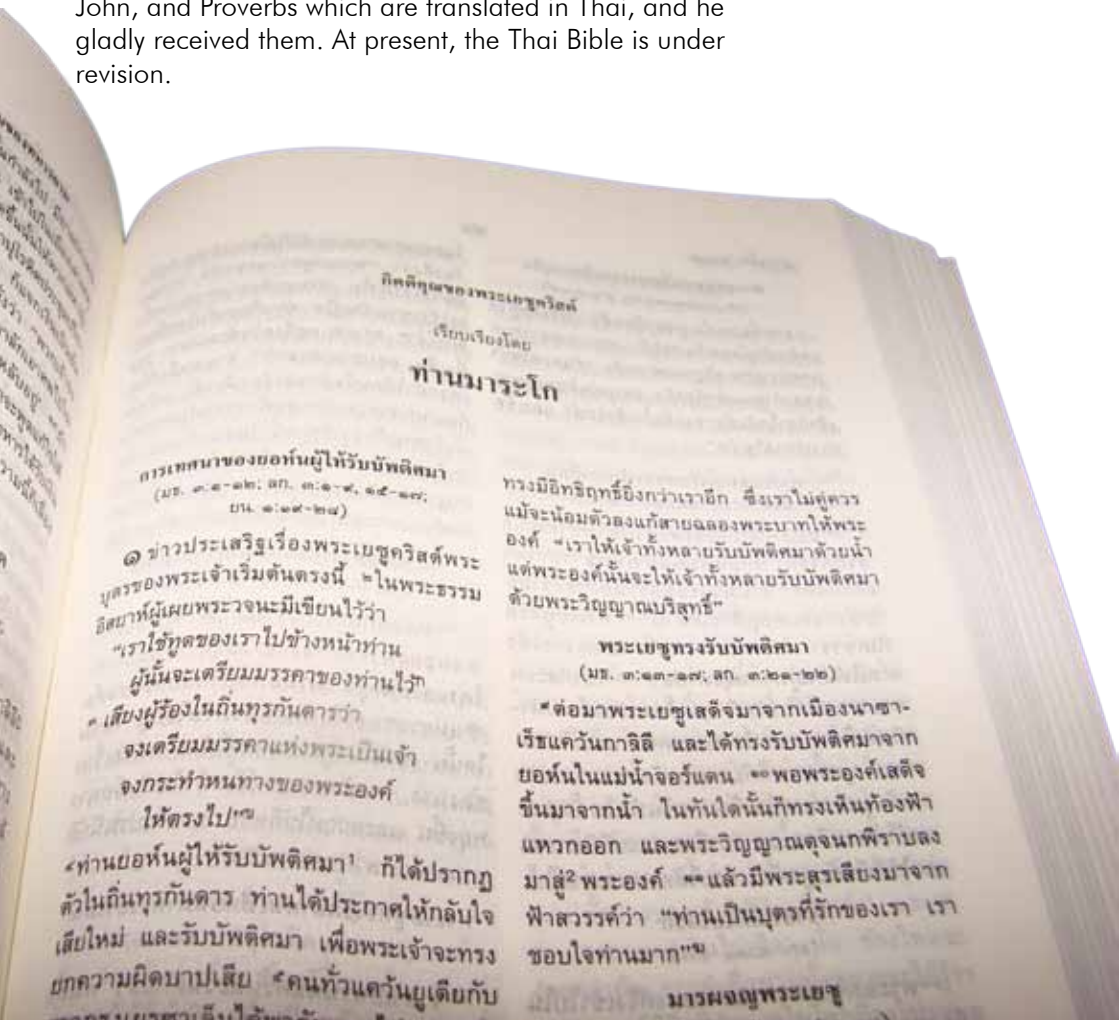
## pray

- Pray for wisdom, creativity, and resources to run appropriate community development activities.
- Pray for God to draw seekers to these activities; pray for workers to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit to identify these seekers.
- Pray for God to raise up more long and short term volunteers to support us in this area of work.



# DAY 25 Bible Translation

Sam is a good friend I have known for about three years. About a year ago, I tried to give him a copy of the Gospels, but he refused to take it. Our friendship has brought many opportunities for me to discuss spiritual issues with him. Last month, he began to show more interest in our faith, and he came to my house and asked for a copy of the Bible. I gave him the copies of Luke, John, and Proverbs which are translated in Thai, and he gladly received them. At present, the Thai Bible is under revision.



A glimpse of a translator's work:  
The Bible translator and his national helper pondered over the phrase 'Jesus is still living' in Luke 24:23. It is clear that the angels' message to the women means that Jesus has come alive. But to a Muslim reader, the text could only reinforce their claim and belief that Jesus never died and so 'is still living.' They both agreed that a rephrasing was certainly necessary in order for the text to mean that Jesus has risen from the dead.

The aim of this translation project is to have the Scriptures available in a language understood by Muslims so that the Muslim reader may understand the message of God's Word. One young believer testified that this translated Gospel of Luke is the only non-Muslim book his parents allow in their home.



Many hours, days, and months of painstaking translation has been done and still needs to be done to see this project to completion. Meanwhile, our friends wait for the revised Thai Bible.

## pray

- Pray for wisdom and discernment in the translation so that the text is as Muslim-friendly as possible whilst remaining true to the original meaning.
- Pray for help in checking at the different stages of the translation process.
- Pray for the Lord to use the Scriptures to advance His Kingdom amongst Muslims.

# DAY 26 The Workers

We thank God for those who have stepped out in obedience and faith to this land to live among this people group bringing the Good News to them. We trust that God will equip them with everything good for doing His will.

As they serve, let us join hands and pray in the Spirit with them. Here are some of the prayer requests we have received from the field:

- Pray for me to adjust quickly to the culture, and grant me the ability to learn the local language quickly and easily. Currently, I am on module five but am feeling tired and looking forward to a break.
- Thank God for two new workers joining our team. I need wisdom and God's clear direction as He molds me in leading the new team.
- Thank God for healing; please pray that there will be no recurrence of infection and that there will be no complications.
- The service truck we use for the work of our ministry has not been functioning well for the last 3 years. Just last month it broke down twice. Without the truck, it will be very difficult for us to perform some of our ministry duties; we are praying for a second hand van.
- Pray for significant conversations with local friends during the month of Ramadan and the celebrations.
- Praise God that my mom back home accepted Christ recently. Please pray that she will continue to experience Jesus in her daily life and yield her life to Him completely so that she will not fear the "gods of this world".
- I am in my final months of pregnancy. This is our first child. Please pray that we will be well-prepared.
- Our son is on an English program, and his yearly tuition fee is too heavy for us. Please pray that God will continue to provide.
- Thank God for the reconciliation between two members in our team. Please pray for unity as we serve together.
- Pray with us that the friendships made with people in the communities will lead to seed sowing.
- Please pray for God to call more long-term and short-term workers here.

## pray

- Pray that the workers will keep their eyes focused on God and the task to which they are called. Pray that they not be diverted from God's call to other areas that may seem easier.
- Pray for God to raise up supporters to meet their needs — be it financial, family care, emotional, etc.
- Pray for God's protection over their family members, and that parents will trust God with their children's future.



# DAY 27

## Followers of Jesus

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it."*

*Mark 8:34-35*

Today there are fewer than 100 followers of Jesus from among the six million Thai Muslims, and each new day presents a number of spiritual and economic challenges for them to face.

### Hanna

Our hearts are deeply troubled as we remember Hanna. She has been a believer for many years. Several months ago she was forced to marry a Pattani Malay man, and she has gone back to her old faith.

We remember seeing her zeal as she served with us for a couple of years. We saw her excitement for the lost and in reaching out to her own people. We don't really know how or what happened after her marriage that made her return to her previous life.

We can't help but be sad and cry out to God to once again move in her life. Our prayer is that she will return to the only true boundless love and turn back to God. We believe that the same God who touched her and gave her dreams and visions will lead her back to His fold.

### Other Believers

After a fellowship meeting, a believer asked for a copy of the New Testament to take home with him. Someone scrambled to find paper to wrap it in because he did not want to be seen carrying the thick, black hardbound book. Most followers of Jesus are fearful to keep Christian study helps, Bibles, and such in their homes. Some are afraid to tell even close relatives of their faith for fear they will tell the neighbors.

After publicly confessing his faith in Jesus, one believer had to endure the destruction of his crops, the theft of poultry and tools, the smearing of faeces on doors, the loss of his wife's rubber-tapping job, and a concerted effort to get her to divorce him. His wife stayed with him, and the believer weathered the storm for a while. However, itinerant work patterns and lack of fellowship with other believers resulted in his falling away.

One group of believers struggles to balance work demands, community commitments, and fellowship. Finding time and a suitable place to meet is an extra challenge to their faith.

Believers need wisdom and power to face the challenge of living as followers of Jesus in their families and communities.

Apostasy in Islam (Arabic: رَدّ riddah, literally means: "relapse" or "regress" but usually translates to "apostasy", or ارتداد irtidād) is commonly defined as the rejection in word or deed of one's former religion by a person who was previously a follower of Islam. The Qur'an itself does not prescribe any earthly punishment for apostasy; Islamic scholarship differs on its punishment. Opinions range from execution — based on an interpretation of certain hadiths — to no punishment at all as long as they "...do not work against the Muslim society or nation." The majority of Muslim scholars hold to the traditional view that apostasy is punishable by death or imprisonment until repentance — at least for adult men of sound mind.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy\\_in\\_Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy_in_Islam)

### pray

- Pray for believers that in their lonely circumstances they may continue to be faithful in their walks with God — remembering Jesus' presence and the Spirit's power.
- Pray for believers to have a sense of the Lord's love through Jesus, to experience deep repentance, forgiveness, and an overwhelming desire to share this love with others.
- Pray for believers to have courage to seize the opportunity to pray in Jesus' name when relatives are sick, troubled by financial threats, or spirit activities.

# 28 Mobilization of Thai churches

Over the years, we have begun to see more Thai Christians develop a heart for reaching out to Muslims, but in general, the majority of Thai churches are still asleep when it comes to Muslim work in Thailand.

Some Thai Christians are prejudiced and misperceive all Muslims as troublemakers due to violence that has taken place in the country, particularly in the south. Some do recognize that Muslims are people who badly need the Gospel, but they do not know how to witness to them. They use traditional approaches typically used with their Buddhist family and friends that are not culturally appropriate for sharing with Muslims. After decades of service, there has been little fruit from Muslim evangelism. The Thai church needs appropriate training and materials on how to share with Muslims about the Lord in order to sow the seeds that the Lord will use to produce a harvest.

Christians who are focused on Muslims are mostly foreigners. They are trying to train and challenge the Thai church to reach out to the Muslims who are their countrymen. A lack of sensitivity to the need for contextualization and the lack of awareness regarding security issues have kept the foreigners away from the Thai churches in the past and continues to hinder efforts in the present.



A film project was underway to produce a people group profile. Naturally, it called for shooting scenes in the deep south to capture their daily way of living. None of the expatriate workers were available to assist the film team coming so help from the local church was sought. A Thai church elder agreed to accompany the team around the city. Everything was going well until the elder learned that they had to go places that Muslims frequent such as mosques, market places, Islamic schools, etc. He backed out due to fear of what might happen along the way. Fear, indifference, and negative stereotypes prevent local churches from spending time with and getting to know their Muslim neighbors which prohibits any possibility of sharing the Gospel with them.

God's plan for reaching the Muslims in Thailand includes using local believers and expatriate workers alike. The expatriate workers along with a few local believers are now working on mobilizing more Thai churches to reach out to this people group. They are developing a new profile of Muslims in Thailand and sharing mobilization opportunities with students in the Bible colleges to enable them to have a greater awareness of this people group and their need for Jesus.

## pray

- Pray that the prejudices of Thai Christians against Muslims will disappear. Pray that they will love Muslims with the love of Christ.
- Pray for a mission vision for the Thai church. It has a monumental task with Christians representing less than 1% of the country's population. Pray that individuals and individual bodies of believers will see clearly their role in God's kingdom plan.
- Pray for the development of appropriate training materials for mobilizing the Thai churches.



# DAY 29 Member Care

When our workers step out in faith and heed the call of God to be a missionary in a foreign land, they leave behind the comforts of their homes, their careers, their friends, their parents, relatives, and sometimes even children. Did you know that you can extend your care to them in numerous ways — big and seemingly small?

I opened my email and found this message from a worker.

"How are you doing? We have been back home since yesterday evening. It was really a wonderful gift from God that we were able to spend our holiday as a family with our daughter whom we only get to chat with over Skype and meet twice a year.

You were also a channel of God's blessing; thanks so much for your time and treat. And also thank you for the clothes from your daughter. My daughter has been wearing them every day, and she looks good in them."

Another worker writes:

"Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote, 'As it is, there are many parts, but one body... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' As we reflect on this passage, we are reminded and thankful to God for the way the members in our church have come alongside us in many varied ways, making it possible for us to heed the call. In the years we have been serving, we've seen God ministering to our mothers through friends from church who are willing to visit and spend time with them. God's love is shared in a tangible way, and our mothers can see it.

We want to take this opportunity to share our joy with you of how the body of Christ has been instrumental in my mother's journey to seeking Christ. She attended an outreach concert with some friends from church recently. When the altar call was given, she said she believed in Jesus but her heart was confused. Hence, she did not respond. At her own request, she asked one of the friends to bring her to another concert a week later at another church. While there, she said she had found faith in Jesus. This is a first tiny step toward Jesus for my mother. This could not have been possible if not for the time some of you are investing in her life. May this news encourage you as much as it has us. Nothing you bring to God is too small for Him! We are thankful for the wonderful member care extended not just to us but to our mothers also."

## pray

- Pray for God to raise up more prayer intercessors to pray for our workers in the field.
- Pray for God to raise up more financial partners for the workers so that they lack no essential thing and can concentrate more fully on their work.
- Pray for church leaders to demonstrate and share the importance of member care to their church members.

# DAY 30

## Teamwork

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:  
If one falls down, his friend can help him up.*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a*

In order for missionaries to be effective in sharing the Gospel in another culture, it is vital for them to be properly equipped and supported by people in many different roles.

First, the missionary needs church leaders to discern, kindle, and commission the calling into mission work (Acts 13:1-3).

Second, the missionary needs a mission agency mobilizer to provide mentoring and coaching through the journey leading into mission.

Third, the missionary along with family members who are going to the field will need to go through

health checks by mission agency medics to ensure that they will be able to survive and thrive in other climates.

Fourth, the missionary needs someone who is financially savvy to instruct on the development of a financial plan which will provide for personal and ministry needs.

Fifth, missionaries and their families will need to spend an extended period of time (usually one to two years) learning to speak another language. Most languages in Asia are difficult to grasp, so language teachers are vital in encouraging the missionaries to persevere.

Sixth, the education of missionary children must be taken into consideration. Missionary children may attend local schools or local international schools, be home-schooled, or be sent to boarding schools where other parents and assistants care for them while they attend school away from their parents who may be serving in remote locations lacking adequate schools.

Seventh, the missionary needs to work with other missionaries in the field. This teamwork should be facilitated by experienced leaders in order to share gifting and provide fellowship with one another so that the team may be more effective in ministry together. These teams may consist of people who are ethnically diverse.

Eighth, apart from pioneer contexts, missionaries will serve alongside and disciple believers among the local people — equipping them to reach out to their friends and neighbors.

Last but not least, missionaries need church friends to pray for them and their families. Prayer is not an optional sideline activity; it is frontline work that has direct consequences for the effectiveness of all missionary work in reaching out to non-believers. (Ephesians 6:18)

We may only see the missionary who is at the forefront of the work, but in reality there are many others who dedicate their time and energy to supporting and resourcing the missionary. Each of these people is equally important, and that includes you. Mission work is ministry of the mutually committed. Some committed believers stay home while some go, but all are committed to reaching the world with the Gospel of Christ.

### pray

- Pray for great teamwork among God's people so that God's work will be administered by our missionaries effectively.
- Pray for God to fill our missionaries with love and grace for their team and non-believers.
- Pray for missionaries to exercise full dependency on God.
- Pray for God to raise up more committed believers to be involved in missions.

