



How Do We Reach the Truly Poor?

This past Sunday a young woman named Manee came to our morning service. She is twenty-six years old and has five children, including one set of twins. Her husband left her two months ago, so she keeps her children alive by working part-time at a cement factory. Her friend watches one of the twins while Manee ties the other twin to her back and goes to work. She works outside while the older three children play in the mud at her feet. She makes about sixty cents an hour. Whenever Manee is able to save up a little money or food, her husband reappears and takes it for himself. I am always amazed when I recall that God still loves that man. The superintendent of the factory is not supposed to allow her to stay on the property since she is only a part-time laborer, but he is merciful and lets her to live in a small shack with three half-walls. They have no furniture. We have never seen them eat anything but rice. Yesterday Chad and Sarah Inman brought Manee some cans of baby formula. We are hoping that her husband will leave it alone.

James recently began attending church faithfully. He was born in Myanmar and is from the Karen tribes, speaking both Burmese and Karen. He lived for six years in refugee camps on the Thai border where he also learned Thai and English. He is a bright young man with a wonderful spirit and huge potential. James' dream is to be a missionary one day; but his mother is sick, so he works long days to earn enough money to send some home to her.

Ajan Tutu was an assistant pastor in Myanmar before moving to Thailand. In order to help some Bible- college students stay in class, he made regular blood donations. He gave so often and so much that he caused damage to his bone marrow. He sat in Sunday school this week with his gums bleeding and then left before the morning service to go to an appointment with the doctor. He may have literally given his life for the cause of Christ. Meanwhile, his wife and son work ten-hour days in a factory, and his daughter struggles with tuberculosis.

Khun Yai Maow is a grandmother who fosters five young children. Her husband had a stroke a few years ago and is an invalid. She recently asked me to help her with her electric bill because she could not afford it. The bill was for \$15.00.

For these people, church is not something they do because they should. It is something they look forward to all week. It is an escape, a vacation, a glimpse of Heaven. It is a place to be with their friends, to be encouraged and reenergized, and to eat what is possibly the best and healthiest meal they will get all week. For them, church is hope.

All of these people have been saved and baptized. They are attending services every time it is possible. Some of them are even tithing. Our heart's desire is to make their lives better. We are not asking you for sympathy, nor are we hinting for money. We are not trying to shame anyone whom God has truly blessed. We ARE asking you to pray. Please pray that God allows all of us to learn to speak Thai fluently, so that we can reach these people's hearts. Please pray for wisdom, so that we will know the best way to make a difference in each individual situation. And please pray for victory over a false religion that has so enslaved these people in poverty for centuries. We are in the midst of a battle, both physical and spiritual, and we need your daily prayers on our behalf.

~ Dr. Mark Bosje and the Thailand Team

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