

team THAILAND



Tutu went to Heaven this past Saturday. After many weeks in the Hua Hin hospital, his body finally gave up, and he went to be with his Saviour. He suffered from a bone-marrow deficiency that robbed him of red blood cells and eventually took his life. Tutu was a member of the Karen tribe. He was born in Burma, where the Karen people are still persecuted. He became a refugee but was unable to get citizenship in Thailand. He lived a very difficult life, working long hours at a pineapple factory in order to take care of his wife and two children while serving the Lord when he could. While he was in the hospital, we visited him, prayed with him, and brought him gifts of money, food, and fruit juice.

On Tuesday I drove out to a small cemetery near the Burmese border where Tutu would be buried. Karen people from all over the area came to say good-bye. We all stood out in the hot sun while I preached from I Thessalonians 4:13-18. It was the first time I preached a sermon that was translated into Karen. Then the casket was opened so that the family could say their farewells. Tutu's wife Wawa collapsed on the ground and wept until my wife went to her and held her close. When they finally stood, the casket was closed and then slid into the waiting cement tomb. It was a bittersweet time, combining the sorrow of losing a friend and loved one with the joy of knowing that he is no longer suffering and is in Heaven with Jesus. We were honored to be able to help and to be a part. This is why we are here.

Now Wawa faces the difficulty of adjusting to widowhood. She is still working ten-hour days at the pineapple factory and living in staff housing with her son. We are working right now to get a passport for her daughter Dumlahkeu so she can work at the same factory and live with her mother and brother. Please pray that we are able to accomplish this.

Our church is thriving, and we are getting closer to the time when we will be able to buy land and build. So far this year, we have seen 372 people receive Christ as their Saviour, with 45 of these being baptized. The Lord has opened doors for us to teach English to the officials in our local Immigration Office and to the Ministry of Labor in our district. Contacts like these will in turn open other doors, building our reputation and expanding our influence. Tim and Missy Shook are nearly at the end of their deputation and have purchased tickets to join us here in Thailand on May 22nd. This week I will be flying to Myanmar to preach at a pastors' conference in Rangoon. Please continue to pray that God will use our team to do something great here in Thailand and throughout Southeast Asia.

~ Dr. Mark Bosje and the Thailand Team