



...And work for the peace and prosperity of Bangkok. Pray to the LORD for that city where you are held captive, for if Bangkok has peace, so will you... – Jeremiah 29:7

A New Home In The Old City



Almost three months ago we invited you to start praying for our move to the old city. It is with great joy that we can now say: Greetings from our delightful *new home* in Bangkok! (Insert big smiles and applause here).

As of this week, we now live in the very first apartment we looked at, on our very first day of house-hunting in December. Funny, eh? It did not take God very long at all to prepare a place for us (and hold it on reserve!) The more time-consuming task was preparing us for the place.



When we first looked inside we thought, “oh no, this will never do – only one small triangle shaped room for the same price as our three-bedroom townhouse near the YWAM base in the suburbs – this apartment doesn’t even have space for a kitchen!” Thus began three months of systematically exploring every conceivable housing option, walking every side street and back alley in this neighborhood that we feel God has led us to choose, and asking everyone we met if they knew of any rooms available for rent.



We considered town houses (living in style...), five story buildings (great for a ministry center...), little slum rooms (instant community...), and finally, simple one-room apartments (like most Thai families...) but nothing felt quite right, and more doors seemed to be closing than opening. Slowly we began to grasp that it is more important to obey what we know God wants now (for us to move into this neighborhood) than to try and anticipate what He might want for us later (A ministry center? Slum ministry? A kitchen?). With that realization our hearts were free to pick the most faithful option for today, and trust that our needs for tomorrow will be provided for when tomorrow comes. We were ready to be grateful for whatever God brought.



The day we went to rent this apartment a young Thai woman that we knew from a different part of the city “just happened” to be eating lunch in our new landlord’s street-side food shop – showing us that God wasn’t a bit surprised by our choice. Later that week the landlord decided to voluntarily discount the agreed upon rental price, on account of our being volunteers.



We don’t know if this present apartment will be our home for the next 3 months or the next 3 years, but we do know that as we left the neighborhood the evening that we made our decision, six separate groups of people asked us if we had found a home yet. If we had simply picked this apartment 3 months ago we wouldn’t have been greeted by these new neighbors who felt like they already knew us. And, if we had found the nice townhouse we were hoping for at first, we would not have been able to overhear them saying: “These foreigners, they want to live like Thais - that’s strange, huh?!” We now know that what is outside of our three walls is quite a bit more important than what is inside – we are ready to be neighbors.

Please Ask God With Us :)

- For Thai and foreign teammates.
- For redemption to dwell on our street.
- To be freeing men from deception.
- For People of Peace: LK 10.
- To teach us how to start a ministry!
- For continued Thai language growth.
- For soft and courageous hearts.
- For extra grace in our small space.
- For wisdom to disciple working men into the abundant life found in Jesus.
- To be ending prostitution in Bangkok.
- For our married life together :).

practice our Thai with the people selling stuff. And most days of the week, around 9:00pm, we walk the five blocks from our front door to where young men can be found working, joining our lives to theirs, even as we now share a neighborhood.

Our move into this neighborhood is just one more step in the long journey of learning to love these young men as Jesus loves them, but it is an important step. As we talk to men working on the streets we are now able to say we live here. We are now a part of their neighborhood.

Sketch Of A Working Man

He is 33 years old (but looks ten years younger) and recently spent 7 years in prison for selling yaa baa – Thai methamphetamines. While in prison his wife left him, abandoning their two children to a group home in another province. Now he is out of jail, without a regular place to stay, and in his mind the only way to adequately provide the fees for his children's care and schooling is selling himself nightly. He hates his "work," yet between selling himself and selling drugs he considers this safer. But with a 1-in-4 HIV infection rate for men who have sex with men in Thailand, he may be gravely mistaken. Please pray for this man – his story is not over yet.

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Please make checks out to "YWAM", including a separate note that your gift is for "Iven & Kashmira" or write "6400" on the memo. Please don't put our names directly on the check. :)

Going Outside

Several friends this week have asked us if we have good neighbors. Day and night from 10-30 women can be seen sitting along the sides of our street waiting for Thai customers to purchase their "services." One block to the north is one of the many hourly rate hotels where these short-term couples go for privacy. On weekdays a neighborhood flea-market sets up on the sidewalk and into the road selling things that could only have come from someone else's trash. Food stalls and food carts operate 20 hours a day. Tuk-tuks (noisy three-wheeled taxis) speed by 24 hours a day. Most importantly for us, men are working only a ten minute walk from our front door. As far as we're concerned these are the best neighbors in town!

Where do we go from here? We go outside. We sit down and have coffee with the women who are waiting for customers. We



Outside of the Grand Palace where men wait nightly for customers

Here And There

Some additional highlights: Kashmira's mom Diana surprised us with a delightful Christmas visit – her homemade egg nog was a special treat! We spent a few days in Kuala Lumpur picking up a 3 month visa extension – thank you Chew family! Iven has continued helping to lead some of the visiting teams ministering to foreign male sex tourists. And this March we are "wedding coordinators" for our Thai friends Boy and Aeow – khop khun pra jaow!

Then from early May to early August we plan on coming to America for a few months to visit with family and friends, get a new 15 month volunteer visa, and go fishing with Kashmira's dad. For those of you living on the West Coast, we look forward to visiting with you then!

We are truly blessed that you take the time to read these letters and partner with us in so many ways!

Thank You!!!
All grace and peace,


Iven & Kashmira