



Rak Teh #8 – February 2009

รักแท้

“Rak Teh” translates as “100% Authentic Love” evoking feelings of real, lasting, life-changing love that cannot be bought or sold.

...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

Greetings from Bangkok!

In December we welcomed our first Thai teammate, named the ministry (see above), expanded our outreach to include the bar-based Silom neighborhood, led 45 YWAM friends to join us for a “Christmas Cookie Caroling Extravaganza” in the Silom neighborhood, started hanging out with guys in their off-time, and helped host our first short-term urban-ministry focussed outreach team. It was a great month...but by the time January arrived we felt like we had been hit by a bus... (insert drum kick here).



The Bus

That’s right, for those of you who haven’t heard, we were hit by a big Bangkok bus while crossing the street at night right in front of “the Loop”, a little over a month ago. Don’t worry, we’re gonna be ok! (Kashmira’s stitches are out, her concussion has healed, and her elbow should eventually regain full mobility and strength). The fuller, rather amusing version of the story can be found on our blog if you are interested.

While it is true that we really don’t ever want to be hit by a bus again, we have a deep and growing confidence that God is truly bringing good out of this experience. Even as our feelings since the accident have run the gamut from initial euphoria at still being alive, to apathy, loneliness and just wanting to go home, this “almost died in front of a bus” wake up call is wooing us into a much deeper commitment to love and serve our Lord, our neighbors and the guys working the streets and bars of Bangkok.

Christmas Cookie Caroling Extravaganza

As the annual YWAM Staff Christmas party concluded, instead of returning across the city to their homes more than 45 of our YWAM co-workers stayed up late making the most unusual of processions singing Christmas carols and giving away 500 homemade cookies on 3 streets lined with “boy bars”.

Carrying candles and bellowing “We wish you a merry Christmas” at the top of our lungs it was amazing how quickly the young men, some dressed only in underwear, poured out of their bars to check out this one-of-a-kind party. Instead of being angry at the “disturbance” business owners and managers warmly welcomed us. One captain (manager) told Iven he had been working on this street for 10 years and had never seen anything like this before. Another man shared through tears how he was going through some especially hard things this Christmas season and it really meant a lot to him that we came to sing and share some love there that night.

Though we ran out of cookies well before the evening was over (we think as many as 1,200 guys were working those 3 streets that night) apparently we made quite an impression. Even tonight on outreach we saw a guy we haven’t talked to since December – as we greeted him he smiled broadly saying, “I remember you, you are the ones who came and sang for Christmas!”



Fritz Photography: www.fritzphoto.com



Introducing Tuy

Tuy worked as a specialized nurse for more than 15 years before responding to God's call into full-time Christian service. Her long-term vision is to counsel young people who are struggling with sexual abuse and gender identity issues. Tuy has a heart to serve God and love these guys – she is delightful on outreach, committed to praying for the guys, and we are really enjoying her friendship and partnership. If you feel led to support Tuy financially or through prayer, please let us know and we will put you in contact with her.

Pretty Girls, Cambodian Boys & More Christmas Parties

One week after the cookie outreach 5 guys from the bars surprised us by responding to our invitation and making the hour long journey (by themselves – mostly) to the annual YWAM Baan Jai Diaow (University Student Discipleship House) Christmas party where they spent their only weekly off-night hanging out with regular college students, and hearing the true story of Christmas. (The next week two of them went bowling with us!)

One of the other young men who came to the party, "Sunny," is from Cambodia, and was living above the shop where he worked. He came to Thailand and started working in male massage so that he could send money home to his brothers and sisters. He came to the Christmas party because a pretty girl from Baan Jai Diaow made the "mistake" of giving him her phone number, and he figured it was a chance to see her again, but since that time he has slowly opened up with us about how he doesn't like his current life, occasionally choking back tears and asking for prayer right on the street in front of his shop, or calling us just to talk about life.

This last week Tuy, our new Thai teammate, was surprised to bump into him at Baan Jai Diaow and mentioned off hand, "Well I guess I'll see you later this week downtown," to which he replied, "You won't see me at the massage shop anymore, but maybe someday you will see me at Baan Jai Diaow." That morning he had quit his job and decided to go back to Cambodia. Later that day he called Iven to thank him for "Being a good person that wants something better for my life." Please join us in praying for Sunny – that he can find new work to support his brothers and sisters, and that he would continue walking towards the Kingdom.

Our Address in Thailand

Iven & Kashmira Hauptman
c/o YWAM Thailand
Box 20 Thungsetthi
Bangkok 10263
THAILAND

NEW Support Address!!!

Iven & Kashmira Hauptman
c/o YWAM Montana
Accounting
501Blacktail Rd
Lakeside, Montana 59922
USA


Please make checks out to "YWAM", write "3588" on the memo line, and include a separate note that your gift is for "Iven & Kashmira". Please don't put our names directly on the check. :)

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to this new year we feel a rich anticipation about the growing relationships we are developing with the guys, both on the Loop and now in Silom. It is so encouraging to be greeted on these boy streets as friends who are there to love, pray for, encourage, educate and listen to the men who work there. We are also praying about how to more intentionally love our neighbors and especially our landlords.

Additionally, some opportunities have recently opened up for Iven to participate in YWAM's process of refocusing and visioning for the city of Bangkok as a whole. In December we partnered with the DTS from San Francisco as a catalyst to invite many of YWAM's Thai staff to start getting to know the city better. In late January Iven helped facilitate a 3-day urban strategy meeting for YWAM ministry leaders, and we are looking forward to continued strategic urban ministry opportunities.

We continue to be so very grateful for each of your involvement in our lives, and God's work here in Bangkok. Thank you for journeying with us!

All grace and peace,

Iven & Kashmira

Please Ask God With Us :)

- For a Thai male teammate.
- For balance between our neighborhoods.
- For our growing intimacy with God.
- For the guys we know to meet God.
- For continued Thai language growth.
- For soft and courageous hearts that are quick to obey the Holy Spirit.
- For wisdom to disciple working men into the abundant life found in Jesus.
- For God to be revealing pathways out for guys who want to exit prostitution.
- To be ending prostitution in Bangkok.
- For our married life together :).