



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

Greetings from Bangkok!!

We're having fun right now!! More and more we are deeply aware of God's active presence on these streets and what a privilege it is to be in relationship with these young men and our other neighbors.

In April we attended a 10-day training session on how to communicate scripture through stories for people who are oral learners. Practically we received a renewed love for the stories of God, with some fresh applications for street discipleship. Iven has been creatively networking among the Thai church and business community, seeking partnership opportunities on behalf of our neighbors and the guys – in June he also attended a significant gathering in Hong Kong focused on what God is doing in the bigger picture.

We are beginning to see a few more regular volunteers join us on outreach in the Silom neighborhood (an answer to prayer!) and have been blessed by some short-term ministry teams. Each week we are meeting new young men, while continually encouraging those we already know to consider making healthier choices and step deeper into the kingdom. Three snapshots of our life follow...

“It can be dangerous out here...”

Usually we feel very safe on the streets at night – we are cautious and aware, but also confident that God has called us here and has the power to protect us (bus accidents aside!)

Recently we started noticing how the “mafia” go from guy to guy on the Loop collecting the equivalent of a dollar a night in exchange for “protection” (If guys don't pay up there can be very painful consequences).

With this being one of the realities of the neighborhood it is very common for Thai guys when we first meet them on the streets to say to us, “Be careful, it can be dangerous out here.”

We have taken to responding, “Yes, thank you, that is why we are here.” Their confused looks are priceless.

We answer this way because many of these young men don't realize that HIV+ infection rates for men-who-have-sex-with-men in Bangkok are between 25%-30% - which means more than 1 in 4 of their clients are infected. Waiting for customers on these streets can be dangerous indeed!

So we tell these guys, “We know it is dangerous – especially for you, so that is why we are here – to encourage you, to help you learn about healthier choices, and to pray and ask the God that loves you to help keep you safe.”



3rd Time's The Charm

Recently we met a teenager on the loop whom we will call "Note." It was less than a 30 second conversation – just long enough to exchange names.

Three nights later, while doing outreach in the Silom bar neighborhood, Note saw us and came over to say hello, remarking on how strange it was to bump into us in a completely different part of the city.

Along with Tuy, our Thai teammate, we entered into a long and honest conversation where Note opened up to us about the hardships of his family life (no father, absent mother), how he recently started selling sexual services on the streets, and the ups and downs of sharing a room with 5 other friends who are also "working" on the streets at night. We shared with him about God's love and encouraged him to take as many precautions as he could while engaging in such high-risk behavior.

Two nights later, while stopping off at a grocery store in a different part of Silom, Kashmiria heard Note call out her Thai name. She bought a pack of Oreos to share with Note and his friend (whom we had met before but hadn't seen in many months) and sat down to talk.

"How are you doing?" she asked. Note replied, "Good...I've been thinking a lot since we talked on Monday." Kashmiria responded, "It is very strange to see you 3 times in one week, especially in 3 different places – you know that we are Christians and we pray and believe that God leads us...it seems like maybe he has something special for you...?"

Note heard and agreed, and here is the really neat part: the friend he was with (also a young man selling services) began sharing excitedly about how he is a Christian, has been going to a church recently, and how there is this story he heard about how Jesus once healed a blind man, exhorting Note, "Isn't that amazing!? Jesus healed a blind guy!" Note agreed, "Yeah... amazing!"

Please Pray For:

- "Wu" an older Chinese man who owns one of the bars in Silom – he is a person of peace in the neighborhood – personally curious about God and also concerned for the welfare of his employees.
- "Luke" a Thai-American who works in "Wu's" bar.
- "Sunny" who is back from Cambodia, and working at the same massage shop he used to work at.
- For "B" who has worked at 3 different bars in the last 2 months, doesn't have any friends, and whose twin sisters also work in the sex-industry.
- "J" who is lonely, likes being prayed for, but is very caught up in the industry.
- The many Cambodian guys we are meeting who are the poorest of the poor among male sex-workers.

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Support Address!!!

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

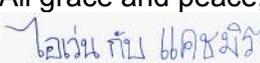
We don't yet know how Note is going to respond to God's involvement in his life, we don't even know if we'll ever see him again. But we do consider it a privilege to have a small part in creating an opportunity for one young man selling services to share with another about the goodness of God – simply by our showing up in the right places at the right times, willing to say hello, share some cookies, and listen to someone's story.

Loving our very special neighborhood...

A few weeks ago while eating breakfast alone in our neighborhood Kashmiria was approached by a middle-aged homeless woman asking for money. After a few seconds hesitation Kashmiria asked the woman if she was hungry. She nodded and hesitantly sat down across from Kashmiria.

Eating rice soup at the same table, the woman's demeanor warmed and she began smiling, sharing about how hard it is to be a poor childless woman stuck in the big city far from her relatives. Kashmiria ended the time by thanking her for sharing breakfast, borrowing a common Thai expression: "Eating alone is not delicious, eating with friends is delicious." The woman smiled broadly and thanked Kashmiria in kind. In truth the food would have tasted the same whether the woman was there or not, but the morning was much sweeter for the sharing.

In all of this we are feeling more sensitive to God's leading and experiencing greater clarity of vision – for the longer term pathways that will help these guys begin moving from the streets and into healthier lives, and also for our immediate neighbors who are homeless or "working". We're excited to share more about this vision as it develops! Thank you for all of your prayers and continued financial partnership!

All grace and peace,

Iven & Kashmiria