

## Seven Christian Prison Concerts in March and April

At the end of March we drove with Isaiah near Bangkok, and ran with him in a 10K run, and then sent him to the airport to go to a Bible College in Malawi for two months (it was the Thai summer break time). He's now back in Thailand. His English is pretty good (Isaiah came to stay with us when he was 9 years old and could not speak English at all, and Thai just barely, and even his native language of Lahu, he could not speak well, as he did not go to school, and came from a family involved with drugs—both of his parents were in prison when we took him in). But, after being part of our family for 6 years and going to various schools, and home-schooling during covid (including 2 years of Greek during that time), Isaiah is now fluent in Thai, and speaks English very well. But, understandably, going to a different country with a different accent, he said it was difficult to understand the Malawian accent. Anyway, it's good to be flexible, and he did say he understood more towards the end of the two months. I believe he learned a lot in those two months and is now in his third and final year of Bible School here. Probably he will continue his Bible education for at least one more year in Thailand, or elsewhere after that.

Isaiah came with us to one prison in the BKK area (waiting outside with Micah at the coffee shop run by prisoners, with some guard supervision), and after our Bible teachings and leading of worship songs inside the prison, we went to the area outside where the relatives of prisoners were waiting to visit someone inside the prison. Micah sang a Christian song with a guitar, and I shared an evangelistic message, while Khae and Isaiah handed out tracts.

After that, we had six more Christian concerts in prisons in various provinces in Thailand. In total we went to 5 Men's prisons, and 2 Women's prisons.

We had our schedule “perfectly” lined up, but then, one prison in one city said that date did not work for them, and then in a different province we got an open door, but not coinciding with the other city. We could have cancelled the open door in either city, but we decided that every open door is important and there are precious souls in each place who needed to hear the gospel. So, we drove an extra one thousand plus kilometers to be able to go to both of those places. I believe it was totally worth it. We had a great time in both places, and I believe that eternal fruit took root on both of those days. The prisoners at the second prison recognized how far we had driven to come and teach there, and saw it as the love of God for them, which I believe it was.

Back near home, Mali joined us for a concert at a Men's prison, leading worship there.

### Mali and Jude

Mali's sister, who never visited her while she was in prison for 12.5 years, has now become a Christian! Praise be to God. Please pray for her Mom and Dad, who have attended church a few times, but who are still bound up in spirit (devil) worship, that they also may come into

the light and be saved. They continue to reach out at 3 Lahu villages, and at a Palaung village. The Palaung tribe is a somewhat neglected group, but thankfully they now have the Bible in their own language (translated by a couple from Dortmund, Germany of all places—where I spent my childhood years from age 6-11 approximately). Mali and Jude are not Palaung, but Lahu, so they go with a translator, and sometimes one of the older Palaung children who can speak Thai, helps them translate, too. Here are some pictures.

#### Da in Mae Ai

Also, here are some pictures of Da in Mae Ai, teaching the Bible and also teaching how to read the Lahu language. Since the majority of prisoners in the Chiang Mai area are from the Lahu tribe, this work is also very significant for leading Lahu young people to walk in God's ways, and not in the ways of the world.

#### Saturday and Sunday (and occasionally other days) Class

During the Thai school break our Saturday/Sunday class became a class on other days of the week as well. Early May we met with them for three days in a row; and then four days in a row mid-May, for day camps, studying the Bible and English, and also taking them to play football, go fishing, and swimming.

Now during the school year, they study with us on Saturdays and Sundays. We often have a house church with them, reading from various chapters in the book of John together, and singing worship songs. We give them a meal each time also.

These boys are mostly from the Kayan tribe (their Moms wear the long neck rings), but also from the Ba-O, and Lisu tribes. For the Saturday class there are some girls who attend, who are brought by their parents. For the Sunday home church there's only one girl, from the Lisu tribe, who's also in Micah's classroom at school. Four of those who attend regularly are from Micah's class, and some others are from his school, but in different grades; and others yet are from a totally different school (mostly the Kayan boys). For both Saturdays and Sundays I go to pick up most of the children, but there are some parents who bring their children to study with us. The Saturday and Sunday routes are slightly different, but each day I drive an average of 73 kilometers (45 miles) to go pick them up, and send them back. One Thai mother and her son, who are from a Buddhist background, also come to study the book of John with us. They are not believers yet, but are very open to learning.

#### Prison Messages

I'm still teaching through the book of Acts via DVD videos in Thai for various prisons. I just taught from Acts chapter 20 and also a message about Amazing Fish God has created, and another one about Jesus being God, giving 20 reasons with verses. In this last trip to the various prisons, we were able to meet the leader of the Christian group, who I've been corresponding with by mail. It was very good to meet him and them. Most of them are

young believers, including the leader, and we prayed with them at the end of our meeting, and I believe more made decisions to believe in Jesus. That group didn't have a guitar. They borrowed a guitar from another group (a government program) at the prison on that day. I brought my Yamaha guitar with me into the prison, which is a little beat up (being probably ten years old), but still in good shape and with a good sound, so I decided to give them that guitar. The leader later wrote back saying the worship team was very excited to get that guitar and they have been practicing lots and leading worship.

#### Five Christian Prison Concerts in May

Usually we don't travel so frequently, but in this season we hit the "jackpot" and have shared the gospel inside many prisons—some we've been to before, and some which were new. We drove from Chiang Mai to Bangkok, visiting Khae's parents along the way, and we able to get into one men's and one women's prison along the way. Then in Bangkok we went with David into one more men's prison. David gave a good gospel message there. At both of those men's prisons the majority of the 60 or so men were unbelievers, so we shared the gospel. Then we went to a prison which has a large group of newly saved Christians. They requested a teaching about Baalam. David introduced Jacob, and Jacob gave a good message for them on that, which I translated. Thai is a tonal language, and I haven't quite mastered the tones yet (I'm pretty fluent when speaking full sentences, and can read Thai, but when speaking a single one syllable word, my tones are not always on target). So, I got the word for "donkey" wrong, but I did come prepared, with the correct spelling written out for "donkey" and a few other words, and the inmate who helped read various Thai verses with a microphone, also helped me get the right tone for those words. There was a group of about 100 young Christians there that day, and they got a laugh out of "1%" of my wrong pronunciations, but really they are a very respectful group. In spite of being heavily tattooed, I think they are more eager to learn God's Word than many in Thai churches where a "good" number are "scrolling" through their phones about things that are not in "The Scroll."

And, these young brothers in the Lord led some worship songs also, with some original songs, which were really good. After that, David came with us to one more men's prison in a different city which had very few if any Christians. We gave them two cajon drums. And, it was x-ray day, so along with our group of about 60 men, listening to the messages, there were about 100 men lined up for x-rays, getting the gospel as well. Those men going for x-rays had chains on, while those in our group didn't. In any case, we pray that many more will have the chains released from their souls, and become new creations in Christ. We did give them an opportunity to pray with us.

#### Daeng

At the same time David and Jacob were here, I got a phone call one day from the leader of the Christian group from a Women's prison. She had just gotten out of prison after 8 years! During one of Jacob's messages, she helped read Thai verses and also gave her testimony at

that church. She really is a strong Christian and ready to serve the Lord. We are giving her some support money each month now (about 100 USD), but she also learned some seamstress skills while in prison, and is making a living doing that, while also supporting her teenaged son, and the daughter of her husband's sister, and her in-laws (her husband is still in prison, and we hope to visit that prison later this year). She's planning to come with us to some prisons to give her testimony in the future, and right now is shining the light of Jesus in the community where she lives (she's not a very quiet person).

### What All is Involved in a Prison Ministry?

Since my days in college I became interested in prison ministry. At that time some of us students went with an Italian mafia family member who almost became a Catholic priest, but instead became a protestant evangelist (Don Smarto), and with us on some of those trips were various former prisoners, and one time the Chicago Bears football player Mike Singletary, and one time a "pink panther" inspiration man, because of his jewel heist, and a king-pin in prison, who later became a Christian (Jack Murph the Surf). I on the other hand come from a very law-abiding family, aside from the occasional speeding tickets, but have found myself now very much involved in prison ministry. I saw in my college days though, how God can wonderfully transform even "extreme" sinners, and in many cases, it's easier for them, because unlike people on the outside, who don't see their need, thinking they are "good people," not sinners, these men and women realize they are sinners in need of a Savior.

So, the ministries we have here in Thailand, are quite different—for the children we teach on Saturdays and Sundays, they have the privilege of learning the Bible from a young age; but for those we teach at the prisons, in many cases they didn't have that privilege, and in some cases they had that privilege, but followed after the things of this world, and only when in prison did they repent. In any case, what we spend our time with to help those "behind bars," includes:

- Praying for God's leading and for the prisoners, guards and wardens
- Having prison mini-concerts at various Thai prisons to encourage the Christians and give the hope of the gospel for non-Christians
- Teaching the Bible and practical Life Skills at various Thai prisons via seminars, including teaching against false doctrines
- Corresponding by letters with various inmates at various prisons
- Sending Christian books and Bibles to Thai prisons
- Donating musical instruments for Thai prisons
- Writing new Thai songs to encourage and teach Thai prisoners (now I've written 10 Thai songs already, most of which are "maskil/maschil" songs-- the Hebrew word for a teaching song)

---Preparing Bible Power Points, and making video teachings of these in Thai each month to send to Thai prisons

---Offering scholarships for qualified individuals getting out of prison to go study at a Bible School (for up to 4 years)

We're now getting ready for more visits into prisons to teach the Bible, which involves lots of letter writing, sending these by "snail mail," for the prison administration, and then Khae follows up with them via "cheetah mail" on various chat apps.

Thank you for your support and praying for us and those we work with.

Grace and Peace in Christ, Scott, Khae, Micahberekiah, and Isaiah.

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