



March 29 On Sunday morning Boonchu and I drove to South Mea Ork village. Several others joined us in the truck. We had to cross a large creek on a bridge of logs laid across, which was a bit scary, as we had to back up on the first try because we were not on very securely. First I got a tour of the village by walking around. We went up to the chapel they had built. About forty people gathered for the worship about half an hour after we arrived. I preached the gospel on “Glory to God Alone” from Romans 11:36. I invited people to receive Christ and 21

people responded, both young and old. One lady who came to Christ was visiting from another village where there are no Christians. She had never been to church before. Only a pathway leads to her village. After the service the church leader invited us to have some lunch. Boonchu and I ate lightly rice and a broth with a mixture of various animal life from the creek including minnows, crawfish, crabs, and something like a centipede that lives on the creek bottom. I skipped chewing on that last one!

March 30 In the morning Boonchu and I went hunting for birds in a valley by a creek. On my first try I got a medium size bird high up a tree up a hill. It was eaten that night. Upon returning we had lunch at the church with church leaders. In the afternoon I helped teach English to youth and children in a VBS going on throughout the whole day. The group of 80 was divided into teams of 8, so I taught 10-15 minutes of English to each team before they moved on to their next module. That evening I preach to both children and adults at the conclusion of the VBS.

March 31 By mid-morning Boonchu, Seaporn, Spy (their 9 month old son), Seaporn’s mother, and their adopted son David went to the city of Chiang Mai. Seaporn’s sister just had a baby, so we visited them in the hospital and prayed for them. Boonchu left money to pay the hospital bill. We left Seaporn’s mother and David there. That late afternoon we went to see the property that was given to Boonchu by a Thai widow he introduced to the gospel. Her British husband and two sons had all died of AIDS. She had previously decided to give it to a Buddhist association, but now wanted to help Boonchu have a place of his own. It has an unfinished house on a property I would estimate to be about 1 ½ - 2 acres. Boonchu has a great need for a place to meet with pastors, as Chiang Mai is central to the region where the Karen live. They continually call upon him for advice and counsel. So potentially the property could also be a place for a hospitality house for visiting pastors and families coming for medical care to Chiang Mai (since they can’t afford to stay in a hotel), for a hostel for high school youth (since there are no high schools in the Karen villages), and a small conference hall.

We checked into a hotel that evening. Mosquitoes bothered me that night since I found the next morning that a screen and window were not completely closed. In the morning we took care of various errands, visited briefly the OMF office and after lunch in a very nice mall, left to the

town of Mea Jaim, population of 1300. This town has a market economy rather than a bartering system used in the smaller villages. They also have an electrical grid. We arrived at dusk. I took pictures of the very large church being built by its members which will seat about one thousand! The present church building next to it seats about 150 and has about 350 attending, many standing outside during services. The new church building is the second largest among the Karen. They have expectations that the whole village will become Christian and come to the church. Presently there is no trained pastor. The main pastor is a school teacher. Forty-five minutes after we arrived unannounced, we started a worship service. I preached again on "Glory to God Alone." At the end of the message seven people professed faith in Christ. We slept that night in a guest house near the church. The mosquitoes were out that night.

April 1 In the morning a Thai woman who has been visiting Mea Jaim from Bangkok and is a B.A. and M.Div. graduate of Bangkok Bible College and Seminary provided breakfast for us. We talked to the assistant pastor, who wants to attend Bangkok Bible College. He has no formal Bible or theology training.

That morning we drove over to the Christian boarding school that both Boonchu and his wife Seaporn attended. I was shown around the campus, which is large with quite a few buildings. It has a brand new soccer and track field just finished a couple of days ago. There is some controversy going on at the school that Boonchu will get involved in trying to resolve between an administrator and the staff and faculty. Boonchu frequently has the role of a mediator in resolving conflicts. I also got to meet briefly the British Baptist missionary Peter again. He is a fan of John Piper material. From the school we drove through the village to see Seaporn's former house now belonging to her sister, then a couple who were relatives, and a property that Boonchu has been offered to develop.

Then we drove on towards Mea Ork, but stopped in a Buddhist dominated village for lunch at a small restaurant across the street from the Buddhist monastery. We continued on traveling over dangerous, steep mountain dirt roads. We came upon a small altar to the evil spirit living in a frog at the spring at the side of the road. A short distance away was where some animal, such as a chicken, has been sacrificed to get rid of something like a bad headache. A short distance from there we came upon a village where Boonchu said they had been involved in growing opium. During the previous president's war on drugs, they had killed some villagers there. I noticed a pornographic poster on a house as we drove by. Boonchu said they have not been responsive to the gospel. As we passed through various villages Boonchu could tell me how many Christians are in each one. A number of the churches he helped to establish. He has been used to bring about 2000 people to faith in Christ since his return to Thailand from Philadelphia over two years ago.

After arriving in Mea Ork to Boonchu's in-law's house that evening Boonchu and I went to another nearby village, Ker Chaw Pho Ta, that has a branch church of the Mea Ork church. I preached on Matthew 6:25-34, "No Worries if we Seek God's Kingdom First." Only about sixteen adults were there. Three of them responded to the gospel to put their faith in Christ.

April 2 Late afternoon Boonchu and I went on a motorcycle not far from the village to bird hunt, but did not get anything. Later in the evening I met with Sutep Niramomnton and Chu Lee Porn to counsel them and interview them before officiating at their wedding on April 4.

April 3 At about 9:30 am Boonchu, his grandfather-in-law, a nephew-in-law, another neighbor, and I went on a long hike to the top of a mountain, going up 2000 meters (over 1 mile). We took Boonchu's .22 rifle and two powder musket guns. Only Boonchu was able to get a bird with his musket gun his father had made. The hike was extremely tiring for all of us. We had to stop a few times for a break to catch our breath. At the top we saw the area on the other side and a couple of other hills that the government has given permission for them to plant coffee on, but they cannot cut the trees. The climate is different on this other side of the mountain. They would like to plant coffee under the trees after clearing the brush. The main problem is how they can sell it at a profit. Another village had tried to sell coffee they planted and was offered a price below their cost of transportation. They were so discouraged that they cut down their coffee plants. We built a campfire and grilled bacon over it. I ate some lean pork already cooked beforehand with rice. I also ate a wild fruit one of the men gave me to try. Although pretty dry, it was a bit sweet. On the way down from the mountain the young nephew cut a bamboo pole for me to have cups made from it. The descent was very steep, so that at some points we slid down. We saw a large lizard run up a dead tree. The men were determined to get it (to eat!), so the grandfather made a fire to smoke it out of the hollow tree. That did not work, as it was not hollow all the way up, but the tree caught on fire. We left the tree burning, as the ground around it had already recently been burned. When we got back a neighbor made the bamboo cups for me with a knife. He also gave me a massage all down my back and legs, which felt so good after that long hike.

Later in the evening I gave a sermon on marriage sitting on the floor of the bride's house with the room full of guests. Some were standing outside the door. Songs were also sung accompanied by a guitar. After the service singing continued until about 11:00 pm.