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*learning &
ministry*
TOGETHER



Bridges: The Chumchone Village Story

by Lori Zimmerman

I have lived in Thailand for just less than two years. Amidst all the cultural and language challenges of living as a foreigner, one of the more exciting times is when connections are made and bridges are built between the two cultures in ways that improve or broaden our opportunities for relationships and ministry to the local, unreached people. As a foreign missionary this is a very important part of reaching people with the love of Jesus. The following story illustrates one of those times.

A few months ago we began recognizing the effects that COVID-19 was having on the local economy. There is a lot of job loss due to the lack of tourists. People are struggling to get by, so we started asking what we could do during this time to help with the rising needs. With the help of many donors, those of us at IGo were able to begin a food distribution

ministry. One weekend a friend and I put together a bunch of kits with some basic food and hygiene supplies, and took them to the area of the city known as the red-light district of Chiang Mai. The women we met and were able to share with that night were so grateful for the gifts, and it began a ministry that has not yet ended. We are excited about the opportunity for ministry brought on by this unprecedented time. The red-light district is typically full of business, but currently is very slow. This means that the women have lots of free time on their hands which makes it easier to build relationships with them. That first night I talked to Mina, one of the bar managers, who expressed that we were coming at a very good time because most of these women are making little or no money and other local outreach efforts had basically

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Bridges: The Chumchone Village Story CONT.

stalled. She also told me that she knows of other areas in the city where people are especially struggling and that, if possible, we should try to help them as well. I took her contact information knowing she could be one of those bridges for us.

Sometime later, the IGo directors informed me that there were extra funds to use for a special project and requested that my Thai teacher, Pai, and I figure out where to use it. Teacher Pai is also an important bridge in all of this. She was instantly on board and excited to assist us in helping her people. We remembered what Mina had suggested and hunted up the village called Chumchone which is a low-income housing area of the city. All villages like this have a village leader, so our next step was to get in contact with him. He was not hard to find. In the small, open, one-stop shop of the village we sat down with Pii Baarm and asked him about the needs and offered that we could help by distributing food parcels. He was a small, sleepy-looking man, so at first I was not sure if we were on the right track, but in no time he had escorted us down to the small community center. Once there, we met with his sidekick who helped us sort out the details of how to distribute food parcels to the families of

their village in an organized fashion. Just outside the village, we noticed a small church. The IGo directors suggested that we try to get in contact with the church and see if they would be willing to partner with us in the project. Therefore, the next Sunday found Teacher Pai and me at the church attempting to create another bridge. They were grateful and excited about the outreach opportunity. It was beautiful to be a part of creating an opportunity for this church to connect with their local community.

The details started coming together after that, and in two afternoons we were able to distribute rice, food essentials, kits for the children, and Bible storybooks to 400 families in the Chumchone village. It took my friend from the bar street, the village leader and all his helpers, the local church, IGo staff, Teacher Pai, all the donors, the food suppliers, local officials and police, COVID-19, and the village people to make this happen. It was truly inspiring to sit back and watch the way that God brought all of us together to impact His Kingdom during this time. Our prayer and belief is that the bridges created through this project will be a means for these people to discover the Bridge that Jesus Christ Himself has provided for each soul.



From the *Administrator*

I think most of us would agree that we are living in unprecedented times for our present generation. The words “coronavirus and COVID-19” have become familiar household terminology worldwide; they have impacted and changed daily life in various ways. For those of us serving with IGo, our lives continue to feel the implications of COVID-19 in the realm of the limitations placed on international travel. Thailand is still exercising stringent restrictions on foreigners trying to enter the country, which has handicapped IGo staff who were on intended short-term furloughs, as well as potential students, from gaining access into the country.

The IGo board was recently “forced” to make the decision to cancel the 2020/21 second semester, which was to begin January 4, 2021. It was forced in the sense that it became inevitably necessary because of the Thai government’s restrictions. However, our board is committed to see the work of IGo continue! As IGo staff, by God’s grace we will press forward with fortitude and vision as we begin planning for the 2021/22 school year. We do not know what the future holds in regards to foreign missions, but Lord willing we will resume training on August 30, 2021. We request your prayer support for the IGo staff who are stranded in America and for the staff who have remained in Chiang Mai serving in alternate roles. Life is exciting for those of us who know and serve the King of Kings and certainly not even COVID-19 can hinder Him from building His kingdom. God bless each of you.

Duane Weber, IGo Administrator



Notice of *Financial Need*

If you would like to help in a financial way to support the Institute for Global Opportunities during this time when the semesters have been cancelled and tuition money is not being received, it would be an answer to our prayers. A donation can be made on our website at www.igoasia.org or sent to:

Institute for Global Opportunities

PO Box 116, Ephrata, PA 17522

Feel free to use the donation envelope that has been included with this newsletter.

Farewell to the Troyer Family

In November 2017 the Clifton Troyer family moved from Bradford, PA, to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to fulfill the role as Director of the IGo Ministries. We are grateful for the commitment the Troyer family has given to help support the staff who are serving under IGo Ministries. In attempting to be faithful in following the Lord's leading, the Troyer family had planned to return to the States in May 2021 at the request of their home church, Bradford Mennonite Church. They then planned to assist with their local church mission called Reach Out Ministries. After visiting the States for a short furlough during the summer of 2020, their intended plans were to return to Chiang Mai and complete their term of service. The current travel restrictions for Thailand have prohibited the Troyer family from being able to go back to Chiang Mai. Therefore, due to travel complications, the decision was made for them to terminate early with IGo in November 2020. We thank the Troyer family for the three years of service they have given to IGo and we request your prayers for them as they process leaving their home in Chiang Mai without a proper closure and farewell. May God bless the Troyers as they begin their new role with Reach Out Ministries.



Clifton & Rhonda Troyer
Caleb, Rebekah, Luke, Daniel & Timothy



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OUR **MISSION**

The purpose of IGo is to provide students with a cross-cultural setting in which mission work, Biblical teaching and personal discipleship can take place simultaneously.

We believe that it is more beneficial to be training missionaries overseas rather than in the affluent Western setting. IGo provides students with opportunities to travel and minister in Asia, with regular returns to the classroom for teaching and mentoring by instructors. The focus is not solely theoretical; instead it addresses the everyday issues a student experiences in ministry.

CONTACT **INFORMATION**

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