

C H R I S T M A S 2 0 1 4

Merry Christmas from the Place of Grace

Parties!

This year we held 5 Christmas parties to include all the children and teenagers who regularly come to the Place of Grace. Presents were kindly donated by Oundle church and transported for free by British Airways, and toiletries were given by a local school.



The children

Each of the children and teenagers received a gift bag containing a small gift, stationery, toiletries, hair clips or a small car and some sweets and all were thrilled! One little boy ran up every time we called anyone's name in hope, and when it was finally his turn, his little face brought a tear to our eyes. Another little boy at the party when someone dressed as Father Christmas held on to Father Christmas's thigh in a vice-like grip, and wouldn't be persuaded to let go until he had received his present, so worried was he that he might go without giving him one too.

Food



Another local school held a concert to raise money to enable us to feed a meal to all the children at the parties. Two local women cooked the food and the teenagers who were serving the food insisted on putting aside two huge plates for Khun John and Khun Gillian, and fought off the other teenagers fiercely who kept trying to eat it! (Khun is a respectful term for adults)

The teenagers

We had kept some donated blankets back to give to the teenagers for Christmas as most live in shacks above stale water and they were thrilled with them. One teenage girl went out cuddling it saying I am going to sleep so well tonight.

The wise men

At every Christmas party we reenacted the wise men following the star to find Jesus. We had pictures on the wall of how they looked for Jesus in the palace, the big house, the small house and then found him in the stable. We overheard two teenagers discussing who lived in houses like the big one, (one with two windows up and downstairs) and one teenager said, "I don't know, maybe that is what the farangs (Westerners) live in!". Then we had a person crying because they had no present to give to Jesus, and a wise man told them the present Jesus really wanted was their hearts.





The Mahadthai communities foodbank at Christmas

The British Womens group in Thailand kindly donated some small bags for the children, with toiletries, a cap and sunglasses in. We started last week to give them out as a Christmas present to the children whose guardians come to the foodbank. One woman, a Buddhist, kept saying, thankyou God, as her son had broken his school bag just the day before and

she had no money to buy him another one.

The middle picture above is of a little girl who is cared for by an elderly lady in one of the slums because she has no parents and the lady felt sorry for her, even though she struggles to feed her. This is a story we hear often at the foodbank. She was thrilled with her bag!



Merry Christmas from the foodbank team!

Ding dong merrily on high



Tim, our minister at Christ church has come to the place of grace to teach the children how to play the hand bells. He has invited the new Christian teenagers to come and play them at the church on Christmas Eve, which is a special time to have their first experience of church.

A very special Christmas

We asked you to pray for the teenagers going to our Alpha away day and 12 of the 13 prayed to accept Jesus and asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Changing religion is very hard in Thailand because Buddhism is associated with being Thai normally. Two weeks later we asked who now considered themselves a Christian and 7 of the teenagers responded keenly. When we said how has it made a difference to your life, their answers were amazing. They all talked about the peace they felt, how they knew God was with them, and some of them are simply shining! They are simply amazing, they come with their prayer requests, knowing God will make a difference, and joining in praying for each other.



Please pray for these precious new Christians

For Donut, who came towards the bus and saw the sun shining beautifully from behind the clouds, and said: “look, God is here with us!”

For Mo, whose face changed the day she became a Christian, and she is so excited to be a Christian, she is begging us for her own bible which we have promised to get her.

For Min, who was very unwell on the alpha day and yet refused to stay at home, and refused to miss out on becoming a Christian, and loves to pray already.

For Ten, who we mentioned in our last newsletter, who was begging us with tears in his eyes to pray with him to become a Christian after he heard John’s story.

For King, who is a real character, and works long hours working at the age of 12, but who has noticeably changed since becoming a Christian

For Joy, who is 19 and has had a lot of personal troubles and yet was the first to put her hand up to become a Christian and is very keen to follow Jesus.

For Mai, who we know has a very difficult time at home with her stepdad

after her dad died, and she felt the presence of God on the alpha day and wanted to cry. She now comes and asks us to pray with her for her problems at home and is really grateful to know Jesus.

Please continue to pray for Mint, who is 15 and wants to be a Christian so badly, but can’t face letting her parents down yet by changing religion. She became upset when she thought she couldn’t still pray to Jesus which she has started doing. We explained that of course she can.

And for Mai, who writes how she loves Jesus, but is not yet ready to change religion, as well as Boonim and Faa, plus Puu, who comes along to all the sessions but hasn’t yet prayed.

We had a very moving time on the Alpha day when we explained to the youngsters that God loves them, and we love them, and that won’t change if they become Christians or not. But God wants them to know that if they follow him, they will never be alone again.

Here in Thailand, Christmas day is just another day, no celebrations, and yet we are celebrating with these youngsters this Christmas!

Finally, a thank you

Thank you to all of you for walking this journey with us, praying for us and supporting us every step of the way. We appreciate each one of you. But we especially want to say a huge thank you to the amazing church link people, who take the time to encourage us regularly and pass on our news to the churches, to ensure we receive support and prayers. Thank you, we are so thankful to God for each of you!

