

### Headed Down the Home Stretch

Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

First and foremost, Cheryl and I want to say: *"On behalf of the 24-million Isan people dwelling in Northeast Thailand, a heartfelt **Thank You** to each of you who are standing in the gap with faithful prayer as you partner with us by undergirding this vital work through your often-sacrificial generosity."*

I am writing this June 2014 newsletter from the Northeastern Thai province of Nakhon Phanom, seen as a small red dot on the map to the right. (I fly home on Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>) Nakhon Phanom is where we began our village church-planting ministry among ethnic minorities in the rural hinterlands. This is also where God imparted the vision for the Isan Bible translation... Isan being the largest combined people-group that never-before had the Word in their own tongue. That is, until the unction God gave to engage in this endeavor.

This newsletter is titled *"Headed Down the Home Stretch."* In fact, we've entered the final phase of the Isan Bible translation endurance marathon, and can see the finish line approaching. It's been a journey of many years, on a road often cluttered with many obstacles along the way, not to mention dedication and hard work as we kept our eyes on the final goal.

Yet, God has remained faithful all along the way... faithful to provide, protect, and to give strength and encouragement, as we plodded along on what sometimes seemed like a very barren and lonely road, cluttered with challenges all along the way. A road that numerous Bible translators have trod before me, many not having the modern computer technology that I have been blessed to have access to, making the task much easier, and better.

At this point, Pastor Pitak and I are reading over each verse in each book of the newly-completed Isan New Testament. Some passages need reevaluating while others are fine. This same procedural checking standard is being done with each book as we refer back to the original Greek lexicons and grammar to maintain accuracy.

All terminology is being reviewed, reevaluated, and correlated for concordance and congruity throughout. Difficult-to-translate passages are being fine-tuned, and sometimes retranslated. It's always easier to get a clearer picture when things have been set aside to cool for a while, all of which requires time and patience. Without a high degree of accuracy to the original text, and fluency in the native language, any translation is practically useless.

The finished product will then be handed to our very-capable native-speaking Isan evaluation committee. Upon completion of their proofreading expertise, the Isan New Testament will be formatted and printed. We have access to a high-quality Christian-owned print shop in Bangkok. These things all take time, effort, diligence, and of course funding. We fully expect to go to print next year, 2015. Printing partners are needed, and we know God will supply.

Thank you again for your prayers and partnership in this extremely vital ministry, focused on this little-reached and over-populated land of Isan—which comprises an astounding one-third of Thailand's total population and land mass.

We continue to appreciate your partnership and covet your prayers. Please remember to pray for the Isan people and their Thai cousins, that their hearts would be warmed towards the Gospel of God's Amazing Grace—found only in the Person, Name, and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ! It is happening, slowly but surely.

A few words about the recent Military Coup here. The initial reason the Thai Military felt it necessary to step in was as a stop-gap solution to quell the increasingly-rabid "verbal fisticuffs" of opposing political factions. Neither side appreciated the coup, each for its own reasons—the pro-administration "Red-Shirts" or the fanatical anti-administration "Yellow Shirt" mobs, prodded on by the incessant rantings of a Mr. Suthep.

In reality, the well-intended coup merely drove everyone's hard feelings underground, but they are still present. Only time will tell what the final outcome will be; yet, no one is holding their breath. We here in the distant provinces are pretty-much unaffected at this juncture. Pray for a peaceful (if possible) solution that will, in turn, encourage these strongly-Buddhist people to seek Christ.

By God's Enabling Grace and For His Eternal Glory,

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