

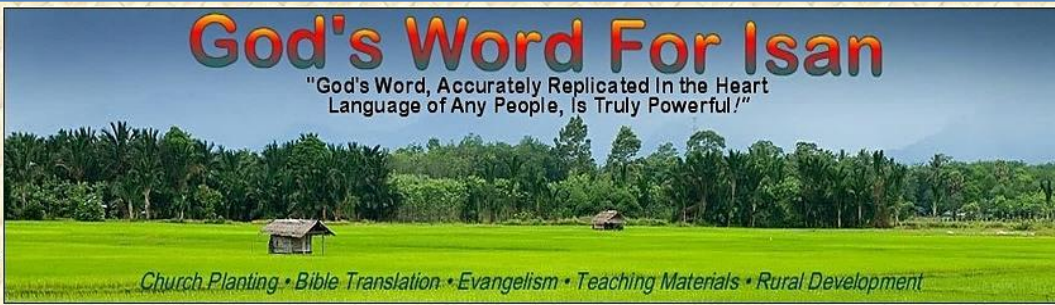
RON & CHERYL MYERS



Going Into All the World
With the Gospel
of Jesus Christ

God's Word For Isan

"God's Word, Accurately Replicated In the Heart
Language of Any People, Is Truly Powerful!"



Church Planting • Bible Translation • Evangelism • Teaching Materials • Rural Development



Ron & Cheryl Myers

GOD'S WORD FOR ISAN NEWSLETTER

June-July-Aug, 2016

THE LONG WAIT IS NOW OVER; PART II

The Isan New Testament Is Printed and Being Distributed!

By Ron Myers

Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

I realize time has passed since I wrote to you. Many things have occurred and I needed a time of rest due to exhaustion and a bout with the flu. Allow me to fill you in on events. In my May newsletter, I stated that we would be holding a *Dedication and Presentation Celebration* on Thursday, June 2nd, in Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand, where, we would be introducing the newly-printed Isan New Testament. This long-awaited event marked the completion of over twenty years of hard, yet rewarding work, culminating in a surreal sense of accomplishment during the event.

Pastor Pitak and I had invited numerous missionaries, pastors, churches, and Christians in general whom we hoped would attend the celebration. However, we didn't receive very many conclusive affirmatives. RSVPs don't necessarily work in Thailand where things are often done and decisions are finalized on a spur-of-the-moment basis. Notwithstanding, what with all the preparations we had made, we decided to cater lunch for 50-60 people, just in case. It was good that we did, since, as it turned out, we had nearly that many guests in attendance... actually more than we had planned for.

Guests (*both planned and unplanned*) included numerous Isan-based missionaries and mission representatives, pastors of various Isan-area churches and many Isan Christians in general. I also invited some local-area non-Christian friends, who had a chance to see and hear the Gospel in action, both in the lives of the participants, the messages, and in the general atmosphere.

In addition, I inadvertently assumed the role of a travel agent during the days surrounding the event. Various ones had contacted me a few days previous to the event, also desiring to attend. So, I set about to make it happen in the short period of time left. I found myself busily occupied, arranging and coordinating domestic air tickets, ground transportation and hotel rooms for these eight last-minute guests. Of these were: Mark Dalton, Coordinator of the SMCC Missions Department; Dr. Steven Combs, Assistant Director of *Bearing Precious Seed Global*, the organization that raised the funds for the Isan New Testament printing; and, probably most significantly, a Chinese delegation of believers from three churches on China's island-province of Hainan. They were accompanied by a resident missionary couple, Eddie and Cindy Mills, who oversee an English School there. There's something very noteworthy about this delegation that I'll reveal later.

The event was greatly blessed in that we were able to hold it in the spacious air-conditioned conference facility of Rhombus Industries, Inc., an American-owned electronics assembly plant. I had supervised its move from Bangkok up to Nakhon Phanom Province in the late 1990s. Rhombus presently employs around 30-40 local-area Isanians. The facility also has a very comfortable second-floor studio apartment, where I have permission to stay while in town, thanks to the kindness of the owner... even having been given the use of the company's Toyota pickup while there.

The event was further blessed by Mr. *Tuu*, owner of a highly successful graphic arts and sign shop. *Tuu* and his wife *Plaa*, donated professionally-designed colored signs and banners. They refused to accept any payment so, to show my gratitude, I did the culturally-appropriate thing and gave them a large decorative woven basket, overflowing with various fruits and other delectable goodies; along with a gift box of Mrs. See's candies (*brought from the States by Mark Dalton*), and a copy of the Isan New Testament. They happily accepted this gift, later complimenting me on how great everything tasted, especially mentioning the Mrs. See's Chocolates. Pray for this couple that they will soon open their hearts and come to faith in Christ.

Concerning the timely arrival of the Isan New Testaments; the Christian-owned printer in Bangkok graciously agreed to print a smaller initial amount (*1,600 copies out of 10,000*). This insured that we would receive a sizable amount in time for the dedication and presentation event, scheduled for June 2nd. (*The remainder of the order was completed afterwards.*) It worked out great, because the 1,600 Isan Bibles arrived on Wednesday, June 1st... one day before the event. That's called "JIT" or *Just In Time* in manufacturing lingo. Concerning shipping, I had previously contacted David, an Isan Christian friend who owns a small trucking business in Bangkok. David faithfully drove all night to deliver the first 1,600 Isan New Testaments to Nakhon Phanom Province, just for us... arriving the afternoon before the event!

The day of the dedication went pretty-much according to plan. We had prepared for every possibility: The large conference room was spick-and-span. Tables and chairs were arranged neatly. The two large air conditioners were checked and working well (*the day was a scorcher*). The catered three-course Thai meal for 50-60 people had been ordered. Ice, drinking water, soft drinks, coffee, cookies and ice cream, had been purchased, including plates and utensils. All the banners and signs were in place. Last-minute guests that I did the travel arrangements for were in the local 4-star hotel. Pastor Pitak and I had prepared and rehearsed the program. Most importantly, the *Isan New Testaments* and *Considering Creation* booklets were there. Barring minor inconveniences, everything was made ready. (*The only inconvenience was that the catered meal was half an hour late, but no one seemed to notice. When the food arrived, the ladies all pitched in to get it dished out in cafeteria style. Everyone had seconds and we even had food left over.*)

Guests began to arrive for the 10:00 AM starting time. Soon, the room was full. We opened with prayer, sang Thai hymns, and were treated by special music. Notable individuals and special guests were introduced. Both Pastor Pitak and I spoke and were given rapt attention. This was followed by giving each guest an Isan New Testament, after which we broke for lunch. I mentioned there was something noteworthy about the Chinese delegation. Of the \$25,000 that was raised for printing the Isan New Testaments, the three Chinese Churches from Hainan province had raised about \$21,000 between themselves! Even more incredible, I learned that *one* Chinese lady had given \$11,500 of that out of her own life savings. How remarkable is God? And, how humbling to think that this one person gave so sacrificially for God's work! It reminds me of Christ's account of *The Widow's Mites*. (*Mark Dalton had thoughtfully brought signed Jeremiah Study Bibles along as special-recognition gifts for the Chinese delegation, and other special guests, which we presented at that juncture.*)

After lunch, we distributed the packages of Isan New Testaments, as well as the packets of Considering Creation evangelism booklets. Pastors and Missionaries were each given as many packages as they could effectively use. We also recorded this data for future distribution reference. When all was said and done, guests said their goodbyes and parted. The huge pile of Bibles and evangelism booklets had been reduced to almost nothing. Praise the Lord... Pastor Pitak and I were elated that the dedication and presentation celebration had been a success. All leftover food was given away, and Pastor Pitak's church members helped clean up. Later that day, I boarded the evening flight to Bangkok with the visiting Chinese delegation and Dr. Steve Combs. They left for home the following day, and I flew back to Nakhon Phanom for some much-needed R&R.

Obviously, the 1,600 Isan New Testaments we distributed that day reached only a portion of the whole Isan region. Some may wonder what will happen to the remaining 8,400 copies. We have it covered. For many years now, I have been doing materials distribution in conjunction with a fellow-translator and committed Thai pastor, Mr. Terng. Brother Terng, who holds an MDiv from Bangkok Bible Seminary, pastor's a church in Bangkok. Fluent in English, he and I worked together to fine-tune my Considering Creation evangelism booklet into easy-to-understand spoken Thai.

Pastor Terng had approached me before the dedication event, volunteering his time. In fact, he readily agreed to oversee the Isan New Testament distribution process. He also stated that, as a member of a Thai pastor's association, he had access to the names and addresses of pastors and church organizations in the Isan region, which we could check against our outdated lists. Concerning storage, he has a large church facility where the Isan New Testaments are being stored in the interim. Meanwhile, materials have already been shipped to numerous locations.

A MEANINGFUL THANK YOU LETTER...

I have received much positive word-of-mouth feedback from various sources. The following is a loosely-translated letter of appreciation I recently received from an Isan school teacher. Suffice it to say that I was elated to receive this letter, as it confirmed, once more, the intrinsic value of the Isan New Testament, reinforcing the fact that it was all worthwhile.

"Greetings, Pastor Ron; I like this book very, very much. I've never seen a book like this before, because, since Isan is the spoken language of villagers, it isn't used for official publications. I'm very pleased that you have poured yourself into this, because it helps to preserve the Isan language. Isan kids today, they don't speak it as much as before. Growing up in the city, I only spoke a little Isan because mom and dad didn't speak it with me. They only spoke Thai. However, when I went to school, my friends there spoke to each other in Isan. Consequently, I could understand what they said, yet I couldn't speak very well. I've read this book Pastor Ron; it's like the Isan language that I know. A book like this is hard to find for reading, because there aren't any. Thank you very, much, pastor, that you came to help preserve the Isan language. I have Isan friends in Si-Sa-Ket and Ubon provinces. If my friends want a copy, where can they get one? Also, since my mom and dad are school teachers too, I want to give them a copy as well. I consider this book a real treasure for the Isan people... something to be very, very proud of."

SO, WHAT'S NEXT? ...RETIRE OR RETREAD?

Retire? There's too much that still needs to be done! The very next project I have planned, having contemplated it for a long time, is to translate all of the Scriptures that speak to God's power and majesty in creation; and, there are many interspersed throughout the Bible. Like the creation-evangelism booklet, "Considering Creation," I have decided to use *spoken* Central Thai, as opposed to Isan. The key term here is "spoken," as opposed to "literary." The Thai Bible was translated into literary Thai, which is challenging even for educated Thai to understand correctly. Spoken Thai, is like *Koine Greek*, the language style which the Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament, not *Classical* or *Literary* Greek. Rural Isanians can easily understand everyday spoken Thai, since they listen to it over local-area radio stations. In choosing this medium, I will be able to include all of Thailand, not just the Isan region. This will be a great companion booklet to be given out alongside the pocket-sized Considering Creation evangelism booklet, which addresses Intelligent Design. Keep in mind that literally *all* Thai Buddhists admire and love to discuss nature, yet haven't a clue about *Nature's* Creator (*to whom they must one day answer*). In fact, *creation evangelism* is an essential prerequisite to effectively communicate the Gospel among the uninitiated.

Following is a full list of items that still need to be done:

- Translate Scriptures that speak to "God's Majesty in Creation" into *spoken Thai*.
- Print and Distribute "God's Majesty in Creation" in *pocket-size booklet format*.
- Record and Distribute "God's Majesty in Creation" in *audio format*.
- Promote using the Isan New Testament among Isan Believers.
- Print and Distribute More Isan New Testaments... *as needed*.
- Record and Distribute the Isan New Testament in *audio format*.
- Print and Distribute More "Considering Creation" booklets ... *as needed*.
- Record and Distribute "Considering Creation" booklet in *audio format*.
- Pursue translating "Considering Creation" into *major Asian-Buddhist languages*.
(A Chinese translation is presently underway; China alone has 1.5 billion potential readers.)
- Produce more evangelistic and foundational teaching materials.
- Conduct evangelism and teaching workshops in Thailand on a *continuing basis*.
- Continue to Witness and Seek to bring lost souls in Thailand to Christ.

Please pray for good success as we continue in the delivery process of the Isan New Testaments throughout Northeast Thailand; also for the upcoming ministry goals I have indicated: Thank You for Your Partnership, Your Prayers, and Your Participation... Jesus said: "**Occupy Till I Come... Behold, I Come Quickly.**" (Luke 19:13; Revelation 3:11, 22:7&12)

May God Continue To Bless You As You Serve Christ,


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www.IsanBible.org

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