

## "Dwelling in the Center of a Satanic Hotbed"

Greetings Once Again (*for the fourth and last time during this trip*) In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

After a two-month stay, the end of my last full day in Thailand is drawing to a close. I head home to the USA early tomorrow morning (Sunday, July 15, 2012) on board a Thai Airways flight. This trip has been extremely profitable, in terms of work accomplished and souls reached with the truth. Pastor Pitak and I were able to translate, check, and proofread both Revelation and Mark, and recheck needed portions of Philipians.

Concerning the title of my newsletter, "*Dwelling in the Center of a Satanic Hotbed*," It's a takeoff of the phrase found in the newly-translated book of Revelation 2:13, concerning Christ's words addressing the Church at Pergamos. Starting out on a positive note, Christ commended them as holding fast to His Name, and being faithful, even unto martyrdom in the midst of trials and persecution. Yet there were those who held to and promoted false teachings, which led many down the path into wrong and sinful practices. However, He credits them as dwelling in the midst of Satan's throne, or center of influence and activity.

I'm not saying that what the Churches in Thailand face is equal to the Church at Pergamos, but there are some comparisons that can be drawn concerning being a "hotbed" of Satanic activity. Everyone who visits Thailand comes away saying it is a beautiful land full of beautiful people. Many are intrigued with the ornate gilded Buddhist temples and architectural building designs that appear to be straight out of storybooks. Thailand also has a few slogans or expressions found in tourist literature. One of those is "*Welcome to Thailand, Land of a Thousand Smiles*."

Interestingly, it seems like practically everyone here in Thailand has a permanent smile across their lips. Wearing a smile is good, as it usually signifies a light-hearted cheerful attitude. The Thai have a lot to be happy about. One is that they live in a land of opportunity and plenty; a land flowing with milk and honey... which they refer to as "*In the fields there is rice, in the waters there are fish*." One person that came to a newfound understanding of the Creator referred to this, as he said to me with a smile on his face and a tear of happiness in his eye. I had just ridden into his village after a 55 kilometer trip, and he walked up to my Honda 125 XL trail bike to greet me, having come to teach another evangelism lesson.

Pointing out across his fields, he, a man of Pu-Thai ethnicity, said in his Pu-Thai tongue: "*See that new rice growing there? God created that rice so that we could have something to eat. Isn't God good? And see that water there? There are fish in that water that God created for us to have something to eat. Isn't God good? Thank you for coming and telling us about Him. If you hadn't come, I would never have known*" I still remember that moment with fondness. It occurred as a result of developing and applying a system of Creation evangelism that I still use today, and have now put it to print in a small 20-page pass-out.

Conversely, a Thai smile can also mask a heart of sadness, uncertainty, emptiness, or fear. Speaking with many Thai after they came to saving faith in Christ, they said that they once lived in continual fear of offending the spirits (re: fallen angels or demons), or lived in fear of not performing all the superstitious taboos and requirements laid down by the ancestors, to keep from falling into a state of evil misfortune... and the list goes on. Now, however, the unsaved say that their beloved religion keeps all that at a safe distance.

But does it really? The Thai people have been practicing their beloved religion (Buddhism) for untold centuries, yet every dwelling, and every store, and every factory, and every hotel or other place of business has at least one spirit house or shrine where they place fresh food, drink, candles, flowers, and incense sticks almost every day. If there isn't enough room on the ground, the shrine is placed on the flat roofs of apartment houses and businesses, but it must be there, somewhere, to appease the spirits.

On the one hand, some of the more expensive spirit houses and shrines (*especially around factories and fancy hotels*) are elaborate affairs that cost as much as a new Mercedes Benz, or more. On the other hand, those owned by poor and destitute peasant farmers are nothing more than an old wooden post with a few strands of roofing grass, folded over the top of a makeshift platform. Believe it or not, there are even spirit shrines placed on Buddhist temple properties. Beside these spirit shrines, there are literally millions of small Buddhist amulets that are worn under clothing on elaborate necklaces, some people even wearing a whole series for further protection from the darkness—the amulets themselves being an integral part of that same spiritual darkness.

Beyond amulets, there are palm-sized saffron-colored cloths with interwoven Bali-Sanskrit designs, penned in red by Buddhist priests. These are typically fastened to the headliners of vehicles, or even painted directly on headliners by a favorite priest. Then, there are the small brass sheets with designs etched into them, which are rolled up and placed in small tubular capsules, and hung from a special necklace. Many are placed around the necks and ankles of small infants and young children. All in hopes of finding peace and safety from the dark and evil forces that continually haunt their lives... and the list goes on. All of this is added to the countless Buddhist idols placed in homes and temples.

Now I ask, is this beautiful "Land of a Thousand Smiles," one of Satan's centers of power and authority? Where's all the promised deliverance these people seek? There is none, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. And, the spiritually-blinded Thai mind is convinced that Christ is merely the founder of the foreigner's religion. They also "know" that their religion is better, since it has more precepts to follow, and is older—the date on this year's Thai Buddhist calendar being 2555.

Thank you again for your prayers and partnership, in this extremely vital ministry, located in this little-reached and over-populated land, which is beyond being white unto harvest. We need your help. Please remember to pray for the Isan people and their Thai cousins, that their hearts would be softened towards the Gospel of God's Amazing Grace—found only in the Person, Name, and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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

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