

The Tao "m"pression



Volume 4, Issue 1

January 2008



CRWRC

Living Justice, Loving Mercy



DEAR FRIENDS

"And so I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it has been fully completed"
Philippians 1:6

2008 has begun and God continues to work in our lives for our good as He has promised. That does not mean that all will be easy. What lies ahead on our path during this coming year? *No problems, only challenges!!* That has always been my motto!

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2008

There is much to look forward to this year in our ministry here in Laos. Here are a few highlights:

- ✠ January - each year the villages participate in a planning process as the villagers make plans for development steps they would like to do during the coming year. CRWRC plans are based on village interests and plans.
- ✠ February - Starting a new project in Phongsaly?? D.V.
- ✠ March – Staff retreat and training related to worldview.
- ✠ June to August – Fennema family is in Canada for Deputation.
- ✠ September – Country and Project Evaluation. The project evaluation is a key requirement in planning for Phase 2.
- ✠ October – we need to submit a request to continue working in Xieng Khouang as our current agreement ends December 08.

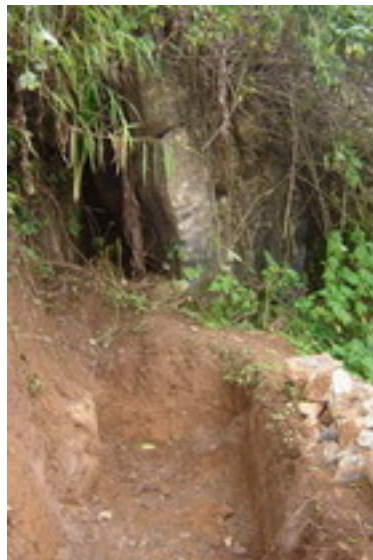
CHALLENGES AHEAD

Phalerm village is situated in a remote corner of Xieng Khouang Province. This village, consisting of some 38 families, was recently

included in the target area for the CRWRC project. One of the priorities identified by the village during their visioning and planning process was to identify and provide paddy land for 13 farming families in the village who had none. A 9 hectare plot of relatively flat land was identified nearly 5 km from the village and 4 km from an adequate supply of water that could ensure a dependable rice yield each year.

The challenge is to find a way to get the water from its source to the rice field area. CRWRC technical staff worked with villagers to design the system that would be needed. That was the easy part!

CRWRC is providing rice to enable villagers to



allocate their labor for digging the canal. A 4 km long canal is quite an undertaking. After a few months of hard labor and many person hours, a lot of progress was made. But by digging out the canal, additional challenges were exposed – in some cases, solid rock outcrops.

Challenges along the path

A rock blasting firm has been hired to remove the rocky outcrops so that the canal can be completed.

A second challenge, which will take much longer to overcome, is that along the length of the canal there are numerous locations where the soil type is such that it cannot hold water. Stone masonry must be built along 1.3 km of the

Happy New Year

length of the canal in order to prevent the valuable water from leeching down into the soil before it reaches the rice fields!!

There is still a long path and much hard work ahead but the villagers have set their vision and are making step by step progress towards that vision with a little technical and financial support from CRWRC for those items which they could not do on their own.

THE MYSTERY

Your guesses were:

- ❖ a board for drying rice cakes/pancakes
- ❖ it's some giant slingshot
- ❖ it is a winnowing/thrashing device for grain
- ❖ something to transfer water from one rice field to the next
- ❖ a stretcher to carry those who are sick
- ❖ a sled that can be pulled behind a cow



And the correct answer is.....

An appropriate technology backpack for the uplands!!!



This is a very common sight in upland areas in Laos! (not with me using it though!) Goods must be carried long distances from the village to the market and this style of backpack is very versatile, sturdy and long lasting. It is used for carrying a large variety of goods including firewood and cash crops such as corn, rice, peanuts, etc.

AN UPDATE ON THE FAMILY

December 9 was a big day for Monica as it was her first band performance in which she played clarinet. I remember her first time trying to get a sound out of that clarinet. She was ready to give up! But she did not, she persevered and now we can even enjoy listening to her practice.

Christmas is always a special time of year wherever we are. We joined our staff in Xieng Khouang for a Christmas celebration with fun group games with a Christmas theme such as having a competition to construct the manger scene out of scrap paper, a sharing of the true meaning of the season, a gift exchange and a meal together with staff and families.

The following day we went as a family to visit a project village and see firsthand some of the activities going on there. And on the way back to the office, stopping in at the Plain of Jars.



A quick visit to Plain of Jars Site 2

A friend and former co worker when we were based in Cambodia recently encouraged us greatly recently when he wrote in an email "I will never forget what happened in Poi Pet. From that time till now I do feel true life and energy. I do love the words "appeal of GOD" and its meaning. With wisdom, we all will live more fulfilled lives."

HOME FOR DEPUTATION

We are starting to plan for our upcoming trip to Canada. Mike and Matthew will be there around June 18 while Moe Moe and the girls will join around June 30 after school in Laos finishes. We will have an opportunity to share with you, our supporters, about our life and ministry. Thus if you would like us to share

Happy New Year

during a church service, at VBS, at school or at a small or large group meeting, whether on a Sunday or during the week, just let me know that you are interested and a few options for dates and times that would work best for you (between June 18 and July 30) and then I can begin to fill out our schedule.

We are also looking for a place nearby Burlington where we as a family can stay from June 30 to about August 10. Let us know if you are aware of any options.

ONE FOR THE CREATION

Although we have not really followed the process very closely, United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali captured my interest when I heard that 3 countries, the US, Japan and Canada, were blocking some kind of agreement. I was happy to hear that in the end Canada caved in, helping to pave the way for an agreement (actually a roadmap to making an agreement) on setting targets for the reduction on the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Whether on a national level, or a personal level, we all have a responsibility to do our part to take care of this amazing world. In CRWRC, we like to call it 'Creation Care' or 'Stewardship'. Why not have a family meeting and discuss about our responsibility "to till and keep" the earth. As a family, set your own targets and make a list of what you can do. Whether it will involve turning the tap off when brushing your teeth, or taking the bike to work or recycling plastic bags, remember, every small step does make a difference, especially if we all take small steps.

What's That For?



Take a close look at the photo above. What could it possibly be used for? Don't hesitate or be shy, but send your best guess to Mike at fivemfamily@gmail.com. The mystery will be unwrapped and exposed in the next newsletter!!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Willingness in our hearts to follow where God directs and openness to God's work in our lives.
- Praise God for our precious children who are each unique and precious in their own way.
- Continue to Pray for the proposal to work in Phongsaly Province. We are now at the last stop (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Pray for the villagers in Phalerm that they will continue to overcome the challenges in their path to improving their lives.
 - Pray that once the project for Phongsaly is approved we can also identify sufficient funding to carry out the proposed project activities.

IN OUR NEXT UPDATE

In our next newsletter we are planning to share with you about the Community Based Opium Detoxification activities which the project in Xieng Khouang recently conducted.

We will also be outlining more details about plans for our work in Phongsaly. Recently it has been on my heart to present the project plan for Phongsaly to a number of churches and try to find two churches that are interested to commit to each raising some \$25,000 per year for 5 years towards the costs of the project. So if your church is interested in a closer link with the CRWRC project in Laos please get in touch with myself or with Henrietta Hulse at the CRWRC office in Burlington.



CRWRC LAO
PO Box 4224
Vientiane, Lao PDR
tel: 856-21-313-071 (Office phone)
Home: 856-20-20-71237 or 856-21-315-168
Email: fivemfamily@gmail.com
Website: www.crwrc.org

Happy New Year

