

The Tao "m"pression



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DEAR FRIENDS

Jesus said to the man "Stretch out your hand" Luke 6:8

A recent sermon was about the man with a shriveled right hand in Luke 6. In order to be healed, he was obedient. He stretched out his hand. We also must be obedient in order to receive God's blessing on our lives. He desires to shower us with blessings.

There are so many things I could share this quarter that I almost do not know where to start... and that almost prevented me from getting started. Poor excuse huh!!!

REFLECTIONS FROM A VISITOR

Back in January, Jack and Marva Jansons visited our project. Jack is a recent addition to the CRWRC board, and hails from Seattle. I wanted to share with you some of the things Jack shared with me after returning home from his trip to Laos!!



Jack and Marva Jansons visit the CRWRC project in Xieng Khouang

Jack writes: The Lao People Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a land of contrast. Vientiane, the capital, is a tropical and warm in contrast with the cold high plateau of the Xieng Khouang province where CRWRC has its community development projects. The streets of Luang Prabang, the old capital of Laos, bustles with the activity of pedestrians, tuk-tuks, and street vendors, while red dirt roads within the Khoum and Kham project districts see an occasional traveler. Beautifully gilded and ornate Buddhist shrines are abundant in all cities, while Christian influence is suppressed. But it is in the cool isolated central highlands, where some of the poorest of the poor live, that CRWRC has chosen to work.

We arrived in Vientiane's warmth from the winter cold of Seattle, Washington, to be warmly welcomed by Mike, Bram and their families. After spending some time with each family and getting to know their background, it occurred to me that God assembles unique families to accomplish his specific work. Diverse backgrounds, linguistic skills, life experiences, and cultural adaptability have all blended together for specific projects in 20 needy villages in the Xieng Khouang province .

We observed a team-based management structure that was effective in bringing about sustainable change for the predominantly Hmong villagers. At the tri-monthly meeting in Xieng Khouang, a detailed report of project progress was given by Mr. Lee Xiong, assistant project manager. His power-point presentation was detailed, accurate, informative and professional. Follow-up comments from various government officials were very positive and indicated the value and appreciation even among government circles for the work being done in these remote villages. One of the highlights of our visit was observing a village planning session where enthusiastic villagers

- ✓ **Google this link and watch a 20 minute video about our project.**
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5303064927301062459>

reflected on accomplishments of the past year and identified and then prioritized future changes. Villagers of both genders participated while Mike stood back watching what he and other project leaders had set in motion. Many villagers working together can make positive changes. To use a frequently used quote, "One stick does not make a fence".

As our visit progressed, we became increasingly aware of the extreme difficulties Christian workers encounter in an anti-Christian country. Regardless, the mandate to living justice and to loving mercy is carried out by improving education, health, food production, road access to markets and services, potable water, latrines, and overall community development. They will know we are Christians by our love. By supporting projects like those in Laos, we are sharing in our mandate to love mercy and live justice.

CRWRC LAOS NOW ON VIDEO

Another event started in January was the hiring of a TV crew to capture footage from the project and edit a video. The local Lao television station was hired for this task. You can see the results for yourself by checking out the following website:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5303064927301062459>

The video was shown a number of times on Lao Television to raise awareness about the project within Laos!!

THE MYSTERY

Your guesses were:

- ❖ stalactites on a cave roof
- ❖ a bird/angel.dragon with wings
- ❖ a painting from a student who forgot what they painted
- ❖ stumps they use it to break open coconuts
- ❖ sap oozing from a pine tree used to make wine
- ❖ Something to do with an elephant
- ❖ a beehive
- ❖ picture of a cave ceiling
- ❖ straw mushrooms



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And the correct answer is.....

Pine wood being prepared to be used for lighting during the evening!!!



The trucks of the pine tree is injured. Then after a few days small strips of wood are removed. The sticks are air dried and then ready to be used to provide light when needed. On a number of occasions we have had evening village level meetings with light provided in this way. Often times I have also seen villagers walking around in the evening carrying a lighted stick!

AN UPDATE ON THE FAMILY

In early March, Monica put her math, management, cooking and communication skills to the test by organizing a half day Snack Stand at our home.



After doing the baking the Snack Stand was open for business. At the end of the day, Monica calculated her profit after paying expenses. She made \$x. From that amount, she donated half to provide children from a poor

school with essential school materials. And then shared the remaining profit with her sister, brother and a friend who all helped.

Upcoming for us is a busy but fun schedule as the children are on summer holidays from school from June 22 till August 26: Moe Moe's parents are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary (we just celebrated our 9th on May 16, a few years behind). That calls for a visit, so we will make a trip to Burma in August just before school starts. Before that, in July we are traveling to Penang Malaysia for a CRWRC Asia staff retreat from July 2 to 6. That looks to be a special time for reflection and re energizing!!

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!!

FACT FILE

- In 1916 Protestants gave 2.9% to church based ministries
- In 1933, during the Great Depression, it was 3.2%
- In 2000, when we were 450% richer after taxes and inflation than in 1933, it was 2.6%

Note If your reading this newsletter and would like to be added to the mailing list or deleted from it, please let us know.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- For strength to be obedient
- Courage and wisdom to know what God requires of us today.
- Praise God for our precious children who are always full of surprises.
- Rest, Relaxation and Renewed energy from the upcoming retreat.
- Continue to Pray for the proposal to work in Phongsaly Province. Progress in getting approval is slow, but there is step by step progress.
- Pray that once the project is approved we can also identify sufficient funding to carry out the proposed project activities.
- Pray also for CRWRC in Laos as we continue to look for one additional community development expert to join us here!



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