

## Chiang Mai Christian School 2018 Mission Trip Report February 18, 2018

Wasatch Presbyterian Church's Mission Trip to the Chiang Mai Christian School in Chiang Mai Thailand was highly successful and rewarding. Regina Prickett, Sharon Cavagnolo (Cottonwood Presbyterian Church), Jackie Solon, Don and Judy Drew, and Leora (Lead) and Paul Hewitt departed SLC the evening of Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> (18 hours air travel, 8 hours layovers). We arrived in Chiang Mai Thailand the morning of Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. Five of the teachers met us at the airport, loaded up all our bags including our donated school supplies in school vans, and took us to our hotel. We spent Thursday through Sunday getting rested, adjusted to the time change, did some tours to Thai cultural exhibits and industries, and worshiped Sunday morning at The First Church of Chiang Mai, Church of Christ in Thailand. We were warmly introduced and acknowledged. The service provided interpreters for us.

On Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, we began our week of interacting with the school's staff, the English speaking teachers, and the students, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. Our English speaking teacher friends are Monrat, Nawaporn, Jeab, Ladda, Kanika, Tom, and retired teachers Sasatorn, Chopaka, and Ahporn. As we drove onto the school grounds, we were greeted by the entire 1400 member student body and faculty on the main playground. Wow! The school's director and student body president welcomed us with speeches, and we were treated to a beautiful musical dance performance by four of the senior level Thai girl students. They wore formal Thai dresses and were adorned with flowers. They presented each of us with flower bouquets. Following their dance, several of the older boy students in native Thai outfits, performed an instrumental number with percussion instruments and a large drum. They were animated and enthusiastic. What fun! At the conclusion of the festivities, Regina made a formal presentation of an anonymous gift of \$5,000.00 to the school. It was accepted with much gratitude. The students then headed off to their classes, and the English speaking teachers got us organized into classes. Leora, Judy, Regina, and Sharon started out in the Kindergarten classes doing projects on colors with the Crayola Crayons we brought, as well as studying numbers with colors. They all enjoyed having Leora read an interactive book entitled "*Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See.*" Jackie, Don, and Paul began the day in the main chapel showing the older students pictures from America's National Parks, a selection of pictures from America's Capitol in Washington DC, and pictures from the old Colonial town of Williams-burg Virginia. Later that morning, Jackie, Don, and Paul visited 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Don came prepared with small 25-piece puzzles, and provided competition for groups of students to see who could complete their puzzle first. It was great fun, and the students loved it. Paul spoke some about Scouting in America. Scouting for both boys and girls is fully integrated into all schools in Thailand. As the week progressed we visited math and science classes for the upper grades. The teachers provided us lunch each day which gave us a good opportunity to visit and get to know each other better.

On three of the afternoons, we visited the McKean Rehabilitation Center, formerly a Leper Colony and the McGilivray Theological Seminary (Christian). We were unable to visit the McCormick Hospital, but all three were Presbyterian Mission Projects generations ago. The third afternoon, we visited the home of Kathryn McDaniel, a forty year missionary from New Zealand, and heard a fine presentation by her step-son Dr. Phil McDaniel, MD. He spoke on his lifelong mission work on the border of Thailand and Burma. He is the son of Dr. Ed McDaniel, who with his wife Katheryn, invited and hosted our first mission trip to the Chiang Mai Christian School in January 1996. Dr. Ed was a legend as a physician there. I recall one Sunday evening on that first trip, following an evening English speaking worship service with other missionaries from China and Southeast Asia, I asked Dr. Ed what his specialty was? He wryly replied, "The skin and everything within." Dr. Ed sadly passed away about four years later. His dear wife Katheryn continues her efforts in prison ministry to this day at the

prisons in Northern Thailand.

It should be noted that all Christian based schools and activities in the Chiang Mai region of Thailand fall under the umbrella of Payap University, a Christian University established by the Christian Church In Thailand. The McKean Rehabilitation Center, The Dara Special Needs School, the Prince Royal Academy for Boys and Girls, the Chiang Mai Christian School, the McGilvary Theological Seminary, and the Christian Communications Institute among others are all extensions of Payap University. One evening, Katheryn arranged for us to attend a light hearted melodrama type production depicting the rich and their indifference to the poor in Thailand. Sound Familiar? It was well staged with great costuming, acting, and dancing. It was sponsored by the Christian Communications Institute of Payap University. One other evening, we attended a dinner presentation at the Chiang Mai Cultural Center. It included dancing and several booths selling goods and products produced by the Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand.

On our last Sunday in Chiang Mai, January 28<sup>th</sup>, Ladda invited us to attend morning worship at her Christian church. It's name is THAMMAPRATEEP. Its Pastor, Rev. Thanit Osiripaibul was ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA. Our little delegation was formally acknowledged at the beginning of the service, and we felt very welcome. We enjoyed being guests for a luncheon type meal following the service. In the afternoon, we concluded our time at the Chiang Mai Christian School by hosting the faculty at a reception in a private meeting room at our hotel. It provided us privacy for food, visiting, gift exchanges, a video slide presentation from prior trips, and an opportunity to say our goodbyes. It was a fine conclusion to a very successful week at Wasatch Presbyterian Church's single overseas mission project. Our entire group then flew to Bangkok Thailand for three days of additional Thai Cultural touring and shopping. One of the evenings, Katheryn McDaniel arranged for us to have dinner at the Christian Guest House in Bangkok. It provides lodging to Christian missionaries and other church workers and also hosts meetings and conferences sponsored by the Christian Church in Thailand. Following dinner, Katheryn treated us to a presentation on her prison ministry efforts to foreign, non-Thai inmates and prisoners imprisoned in Chiang Mai. She had traveled to Bangkok earlier on church business. Following our three days in Bangkok, Jackie returned to SLC, Don, Judy, Regina, and Sharon flew to Hong Kong for three days of touring, and Paul and Leora flew to Myanmar (Burma) for four days of fascinating touring in Yangon, Bagan, and Mandalay.

Paul Hewitt