

PRAISE AND PRAYER

from Johnny and Ann McClean in Bangkok

Helping people living in Thailand to see, know and love Jesus



February 2017

Thank you for the many warm letters, emails, cards and online messages we received after our prayer letter in December. We are grateful for the many people who are continuing to prayerfully support us as Johnny transitions from student ministry to local church ministry in this first part of the year.

CHURCH MINISTRY

These first weeks of 2017 have been encouraging as Johnny starts to spend more time each week with Pramote, our church pastor. He has enjoyed being able to attend the weekly cell group and has been spending time meeting with Pramote and key people each week to talk about some of the challenges they are facing and to pray and dream together about the way the Lord might be leading them as we move into 2017.

We are so grateful for Pramote's faithfulness and perseverance in spite of discouragements as some people move away from Bangkok and the church. There has been no major disagreement or arguments in the congregation, rather personal circumstances and spiritual apathy are having a significant impact on some people and the core membership is now just 20-25 people.

One key family may well be leaving in March. This family were part of the first church-planting team, the husband has been an elder in the church and the wife has, at different points, helped to lead the children's ministry. They were also next door neighbours to Tang and Pramote when Tang was diagnosed with cancer four years ago.

Please pray that the Lord will continue to sustain Pramote and give him a confidence and joy in the Gospel rather than in numbers.

Pray too that the Lord would stem the flood of departures and that the church would start to really look outwards in evangelism and gospel-focussed relationships with families, neighbours and friends.

Pray for Johnny preaching once a month and meeting weekly with key people to encourage and help them as they seek the Lord's will for the future.

On March 5 the church will mark their 10th anniversary with a special service. There has been a sense of reluctance to organise anything 'because we are so small'.

Pray that this day will not only be a celebration of God's goodness to the members through the past 10 years but will also be a turning point in their sense of faith and confidence in God's good plans for their future.

REFUGEES

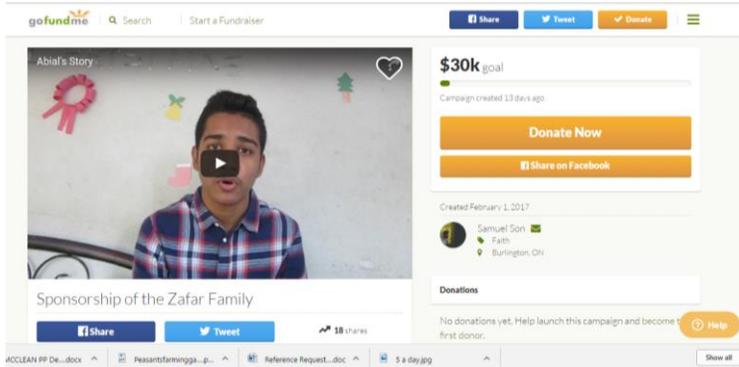
Our P'stan friends continue to pray and wait for placement in a third country. Zafir and other members of the extended family have now been in the International Detention Centre more than one year and Feb 4 marked the first anniversary of his wife's release with the two children. That means that they have now not seen dad for a year! The IDC only allows people to visit who have a passport and valid visa. Those on bail from IDC are not allowed to visit those still under arrest.

Please pray for Zafir and the wider family to wait with patience and trust for the wheels of the legal system to turn. They are turning but it is very, very slow! Waiting can be hard and the family have had a number of health issues, mainly related to their poor living conditions and stress.

Positively, we have heard this week that a church in Canada has agreed with the government to sponsor Zafir, his wife and two children to be relocated. Canada has one of the most positive refugee programmes in the world. The church needs to raise around £20,000 and can then apply to the government for the family to be flown into Canada. They will be hosted by the church family for one year and supported to find work, school places and a home. Sadly, this will also mean being separated indefinitely from the rest of the relatives as the church can only raise the funds for Zafir's immediate family.

Please pray for Zafir's family as they face heart-wrenching decisions. Pray too for the church in Canada working with the government to raise the funds needed to enable the family to be able to move to a new home.

If you would like to donate to this fund in Canada you can do so via [Go Fund Me](#).



Please pray that Ann would have wisdom as she prepares this new course for the school.

In a recent dialogue with a parent over an issue at school she mentioned 'another parent told me to talk to you and that I could be sure that you would tell the truth because you are a really serious Christian, not just one of those people who calls themselves a Christian but doesn't mean it!'. Walking through a conservation area on residential a student asked 'So, Mrs Ann, do you believe in one God or three? I don't understand how that works!'

Moments like this feel like a cool breeze in the heat of the school day, especially when Ann can feel as if there are very few opportunities to talk directly about her faith.

Praise God that parents, staff and students are gossiping about what Ann believes!

Pray that Ann and the children will all 'walk worthy' as others watch our lives and our words.

Praise God for answered prayer as we enjoyed both safety and good converstaions during Residential in January!

*Johnny and Ann,
Matthew, Bethan and Joshua*

KEY DATES COMING UP:

Feb 17-23: missionary family from South Africa exploring possible ministry opportunities with us.

March 5: 10th anniversary of New City Fellowship Church

March 9-20 Johnny in UK

March 11: Friends International Conf, Edinburgh

March 12-18: Northern Ireland

March 18-20: Midlands (*to be confirmed*)



SCHOOL

In our last letter we talked about some of the changes coming up for Ann at school. One of the things we have learnt to expect at school is the certainty that nothing is certain!

In January the company who own the school announced that the leadership course would not be running this year due to lack of numbers make it viable. Just as we were breathing a sigh of relief and thinking that Ann's workload might be looking a little lighter, the news came that Ann will be teaching a new IGCSE course from August called Global Perspectives!

This is a new IGCSE for the school and a whole new curriculum for Ann to get her head around in the next four months! However, it is an exciting prospect as it looks at many issues such as education, refugees and war, health and poverty, culture and language and human identity. Issues that she has been thinking about and wrestling with for many years in life and ministry.

There will be lots of opportunities to present her personal worldview in class debates, to invite people in to discuss issues with the class and also to take students on field trips around Thailand to see some of the social issues here in Thailand and people working to solve problems in everyday life.

