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An Unforgettable Lesson in Humility & Servanthood



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Tansy Kadoe led a small team from Phoenix(AZ) to Thailand on her first short-term mission trip, to teach pastoral counseling, to strengthen relationships, to see the face of God, but most importantly to provide the ministry of presence, of love and hope. Here are her reflections:

“To God be the glory! I was very excited and thankful, when Duane Blinkley, retired missionary and now Special Assistant to the Area Director of Southeast Asia & Japan at International Ministries suggested I lead a team on a short-term mission trip to teach and counsel with Bible school students at the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College (KKBBSC). I am thankful to Duane and Marcia, his wife, International Ministries (IM), Bellevue Heights Church Foundation, Friends of Burma, Arizona Karen Baptist Church, and my team members for their partnership. The camp we were at in Thailand has housed refugees from Burma for the past 30 years, the result of civil war that erupted in 1949 and never seemed to end. Under auspices of the U.N., the more than 45,000 refugees at the camp have recently experienced dwindling food supplies, along with difficult living conditions,

limiting freedom in speech, movement, association, visitation, etc. Amidst these restrictions, KKBBS is engaging in the Kingdom work, spreading and living out the good news and values of God's Kingdom. For the 2017-2018 academic year, a total of 475 students enrolled in the Karen Theological Study, Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity, and Master of Art in Religious Education programs. The faculty and staff number 47. The KKBBS is in charge of two day care centers for 101 students (grades K-12). These students are either orphans or children from remote areas seeking education.



As soon as our small team arrived at KKBBS, we attended the morning chapel and were greeted with an angelic choir that immediately warmed our hearts. We were assigned to teach counseling principles, concepts and techniques to the final-year students of the Karen Theological Study program. The students grasped very quickly all we were teaching, which brought more depth to the many role plays we facilitated on a daily basis. We were on a sacred ground with the students. We appreciated their willingness to embrace vulnerability and learning to participate in the healing ministry. We laughed and cried together. Their hearts met ours; we could not help but fall in love with them. Many KKBBS students come from non-believing families. They often face harsh treatment from their loved ones for choosing Christian faith. Yet, many expressed the desire to be missionaries in their homes and surrounding villages.



In a recent conversation, someone asked me, “Metaphorically speaking, if your trip were likened to a choir, what was the leitmotif that harmonized everyone in an angelic melody?” The words that immediately came to mind were “**sacrificial giving.**” Everywhere I looked, I saw overwhelming evidences of sacrificial giving beyond their means – so radical that it might be hard for some of us to comprehend. Here are some examples:

- All teachers at KKBBS are volunteers. Many of them forego a more comfortable lifestyle and paid job opportunities elsewhere (i.e. U.S., Canada, etc.). They choose to serve, and in doing so, are separated from their loved ones, such as spouses and children.
- In receiving us as guests, they take tremendous risks as there is a prohibition of freedom of movement in the refugee camp. I asked one of the teachers, “Why take the risks? Or why not pick and choose whom you will receive, to weed out not-so-helpful guests?” This was his answer, “Hospitality is our ministry.”
- I truly felt that everyone I crossed paths with would give us the shirts off their backs. And they did. We were fed with good food, nicely arranged in small bowls. Yet in the same building, only a few steps away from us, the staff and teachers ate nothing but rice, fermented fish paste, and vegetables.





No one complained. Instead, I heard heart-felt praises for God, for gracing them with our presence. I heard desires to serve God and be a blessing to others. I feel that one of my team members got it right when he described what he witnessed like this: "It is about serving without being fixated on how "I" want to serve, or what "I" would get out of serving; but rather having a heart of a servant." What is astounding to me, is that the heart for **sacrificial giving** permeated in every person I met at the camp. It was like seeing the poor widow Jesus talked about come alive and walk around everywhere at the refugee camp, devoid of freedom or worldly comforts. Mark 12:44b - *"... she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."*

Having been the recipient of the poor widow's two coins, I walked out of the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College richer than ever. I left there dedicated to using my voice as a means to spread the word about the sacrificial giving of these wonderful friends, and to seek support for them as they continue to minister to the glory of God in very difficult circumstances. You are invited to join me in this effort."

For more information about short-term mission teams and service opportunities, please contact the Short-Term Mission Office at volunteers@internationalministries.org