

PRAY POSTED ON JANUARY 29, 2019

Pray for Debby and Kyle Witmer and their family as they experience the stresses of the transition for their return to the United States for their one-year Home Assignment.



BOB SANTILLI

Debby and Kyle serve the Thai Karen Baptist Convention (TKBC) Siloam Bible Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where they work in pastoral education and leadership development. Young people from the Karen ethnic group attend the school with the goal of following the call of God on their lives to be pastors and evangelists among the Karen villages in the hills of Thailand. Kyle is also involved in continuing education with TKBC pastors and evangelists.

Debby is providing worship leadership to conferences in the area and helping with the English language program at Siloam. The Witmers continue discipleship with their own children through homeschooling.

Debby and Kyle write – *Our daughter, Julia, has her own blog where she posts about her life and things that are important to her, like her writing. And sometimes – like today – the realities of being an MK push her to sharing with others a little bit about her experiences. In particular on our minds right now is our upcoming transition to the states for our US Assignment, when we will be gone from Thailand for a full year.*

If you have never lived overseas, you may not completely understand everything that our family is going through right now as we try to plan for this upcoming transition. But Julia does a pretty good job of giving a little summary of some of the ups and downs she's facing. Although, as she puts it, it's a "tough topic" to share about. Here is some of what she has to say:

Their daughter Julia writes – Why is this a tough topic? Well, mostly because I'm worried that people will think that this means that I don't want to return back to the USA. So, let me just clarify: **that's not at all the case.** It's not that I don't want to go back to the States, **it's just that there are a lot of aspects involved in moving and relocating and readjusting that don't get me too excited**, and kind of take the fun out of the idea of going back and seeing old friends and family.

What are those things?

SAYING GOODBYE TO FRIENDS IN THAILAND

I've probably said this a hundred times, and I'll say it a hundred more — **saying goodbye to friends is really, really hard.** Especially because of the ever-changing climate of the missionary community here, and the ages of friends. **There are no promises that anybody I know now will be here when I get back** — either because they're going off to college or just because they may or may not be moving back to their home countries before we come back. Some of those things we can't even know ahead of time, so when I come back in 2020 there may be a bunch of people gone that I didn't know would be.

FRIENDS BACK IN THE STATES HAVE CHANGED

It's been four years since we lived in the US. **A lot changes in four years — especially the four years reaching from ages 12-16.** Keeping in touch with people long-distance isn't the same as seeing them in person, knowing them, watching them change and grow and mature. **There will be a lot of things there that I haven't even had the time to notice in our visits back there,** because most of those visits only lasted about a week (in that area) anyway.

I'm thrilled to see old friends, and I can't wait for that. But a part of me also knows that, although our friendships can continue if all the people involved want it to, **they'll never be the exact same friendships as they were when we were younger.** I've missed four years of their lives, and they've missed four years of mine.

THE COUNTRY ITSELF HAS CHANGED

I'm not commenting on whether or not that's for the better, but a lot has changed since we left. A new president, new laws, a changing culture that we weren't present in to

watch it change. **Although everything in the USA is familiar to those living there, my whole family and I are going to have to readjust to a culture that's now totally unfamiliar to us,** much like we had to do when we came here for the first time.

WE'RE HEADING INTO A WHOLE YEAR WITH BASICALLY NO TIME FOR REST IN SIGHT

Visiting churches, going to camp, going to a writer's conference...**Our year's pretty much booked,** and if I understand it right, we're probably going to be at a different church every week. That's pretty cool in some ways — **I love visiting the absolutely amazing people who support us and keep us here, because they're so kind and generous and fantastic and fun** — but in other ways it's kind of not cool — it means that we won't have a church to call our own, which means that the process of readjusting might be more difficult than it would have been if we had our own "home church" that wasn't 8,000 miles away.

Speaking of, that leads us on to the last thing on our list for today...

LEAVING OUR CHURCH

I love our church here so. Much. **I love the people, I love the worship style, I love having the privilege of helping to lead worship occasionally.** I just...love it. And leaving the community and the church will be really hard.

If you'd like to read Julia's complete blog post, you can find it at:

[A Glimpse into the Life of an MK: Why I'm Not Sure if I'm Excited About Going "Home"](#)

For information on prayer ministry contact Rev. Bob Santilli, 610-768-2187,
bobsantilli@internationalministries.org