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Reflections From 2010



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THAILAND

Dear Friends:

It's hard to believe that Christmas and the New Year are already behind us. Like many of you, we too find ourselves thinking about this past year and reflecting about our lives. Thailand and Burma are places that have a combination of so many extremes. Death and new birth. Sadness and Joy. There is not a day that passes that we do not see or hear about people working to change a desperate situation. Everything from migrant workers who came all the way from Burma to do construction work and then when finished were not paid

at all; to a recent situation where a young family from across the border who had been trying to set up a new way of life here, had their working father/husband die suddenly in his sleep. (He and his wife and 3 children under the age of 4 had all lived in a small single-room home.) All of these people now face one thing in common here in Northern Thailand; they are now new targets for trafficking, as defined by either labor abuses or human slavery. They have few options as they live as displaced people in extreme poverty. And without citizenship, they have few if any rights. Our hearts ache for them, but our spirits are also moved to take action.

At this time of the year, we reflect on the similarity of what Joseph and Mary must have felt as parents to a child of impoverished, marginalized refugees. God's intervention in human history, deliberately siding with the poor and oppressed of the world by embracing their vulnerability in the midst of a deadly empire is a story of action too. We are so grateful for your partnership with us, responding to the needs here on the border, and wanted to let you know how much your acts of prayer and support mean to us. This is the type of action Jesus modeled for us all.

I think it is some of the realness of the situation here and what is at stake that gives us purpose and allows us to face these injustices. Once you know someone personally who is suffering from this type of oppression or see the impact of deep poverty in an entire generation, you cannot push it out of your mind. And this motivates us all to get involved. If we look closely, we are able to see the divine unfolding of a plan that it is far more creative and encompassing than we could ever orchestrate by ourselves. And we can say that this is simply the work of God. We join together at this time of the year to unite in this call to action both in the U.S. and here abroad.

Finally, we'd like to express our deepest gratitude for all of the support we've received this past year from our entire faith community. Your prayers, visits, letters and financial support have made this a remarkable year for all of our projects. Look for another post next month on our 2011 ministry needs when we return from our visit across the border.

Blessings and Peace to all.