

JOURNALS POSTED ON JANUARY 13, 2017

There and Back Again



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



THAILAND

I'm smiling as I begin to type this message to all of you. The sheer joy of connecting with you from so far away captivates me.

I'm at my office at the New Life Center. The room is lit softly by a small lamp and the natural light of the sun buried deep in the clouds of rainy season. I can hear Tik and Alek, my co-workers, downstairs preparing lunch for the five of us who are here today.

It has been nearly six months since I last wrote an update, and those months have surged by, one after another, like waves thundering and crashing on windy day at the seashore.

The highlight of February and March was being asked to speak to local pastors and community leaders on the theology of gender equality. Speaking for forty minutes, in Thai, on such a serious issue, was a milestone in terms of language acquisition. Assume one hour of preparation for each minute, and you have an idea of how intensely I prepared.

Those months were also spent preparing New Life Center for my two-month absence throughout April and May. I worked ahead on everything I possibly could.

The original reason for my absence was an anti-trafficking conference being held in the U.S., where I would represent the New Life Center and its work. Since I was making the long trip already, I asked to be given some time to visit churches and donors. I also took my vacation time to visit friends and family. During that 8 weeks, I spoke in 8 churches, had 35 face-to-face meetings with supporters, and slept in 9 beds in 5 different states. It was wonderfully exhausting. I laughed (a lot), I cried (a lot), and I am still praising God for those precious, priceless moments, planned and unplanned.

And now, I'm back! It feels good to be home in Thailand. There is a mountain of work to catch up on, and while I really am quite tired, I'm also feeling decidedly joyful. The upcoming year's work is exciting and challenging. I'll be overseeing 2 personnel for the first time ever. I'll be writing grant reports and hosting teams, and staying in contact with all of you! New Life Center has over 65 residents this term, and over 200 scholarship students studying in vocational training programs or university. I am humbled and grateful to be part of it all!

Thank you; thank you from the bottom of my heart – for your ongoing care and support. I truly would not be *here* if you weren't *there*. Your faithfulness equips my obedience!

With love,

Jeni