

Thai Greeting: “BY NIGH MAA?” **“WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM?”**

Is it a loaded question for a guilty conscience? Or perhaps it's an informal greeting? “Where are you coming from?” or “Where have you been?” is actually the literal translation of a common greeting here in Thailand. So we respond with a brief answer on what we've been up to recently.

After all our time in Bangkok, it's really getting into our skin. A strange sense of patriotism and homeland-ness has tattooed us permanently. We stop with the masses to sing (quietly) the national anthem as it plays everyday at 8 a.m. and 6



p.m. We whisper prayers of ‘God, please, for this land, Long Live the King’ when we see his photos and hear his anthem. The many young people who come here from all over the world wonder why they fall in ‘Bangkok love’ and never want to leave. I respond with the metaphor of a French kiss... the Kiss of Bangkok. You can't wipe it off, you can't spit it out, and you can't pretend it never happened. Before coming here, no one can know what it is to not have had that indelible kiss, however, once you've come and experienced it, you go away and it changes everything from here on in.

How has it changed us? Bangkok has proven to us that God is here. Already, Since the beginning of time. With or without us, God is stirring things up, and He invites us in so that we can be changed. Like the pool of Bethesda, God moves things, stirs things, and lets us get in and find healing. As missionaries we do not bring God's love to a place. As his children living anywhere, we keep our eyes open for his love-activity that is already in motion.

We are seeing that motion in the most unconventional ways. That could be due to the fact that we are not quite conventional and see things through unconventional eyeballs. We get unconventional-but-not-heretical ideas about the theology of the party, or the redemption of fun. It's not just for the sake of being unconventional that we are living these things, but it comes about as we see our friends,



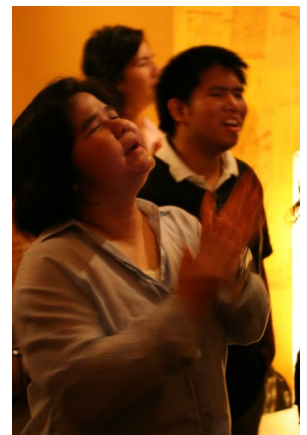
young people –third culture, global, urban citizens of earth – who come to realize how great is God’s love and their response to that love is like nothing we’ve ever seen. They have unlearned and natural responses of unrehearsed gratitude. We are seeing how this generation will colour the world with brand-spanking-new crayons. We see God walking around in new-millennium skin. Who’s to say God’s wardrobe has to be bargain basement specials at Walmart or even the tasteful yet conservative retro Chanel? Why not the new Fall-Winter 08 D&G line?

Our new fall line of radical third-culture misfits starts with this group of guys. This is a team of committed friends who see the worldtable in front of them. They refuse to call anything unclean that the Tablemaker has called clean. Oliver works with a sustainable development foundation and contributes hugely to our worship team; Yo works fulltime with our churchplant, NewSong Bangkok, doing enormous amounts of connecting and networking and skillful translating; Kilang is the Creative Ministries Guy at NewSong Bkk as well as the founder of our Pool (snooker) Night Hot Spot; and Santosh is part of the speaking team at NewSong as well as teacher, coach and innovative-life guy.



Oliver (Thai), Yo (Thai), Kilang (Naga, India), Santosh (Irvine, CA)

This is Apple. When we met her she was in love with God but couldn’t really find a place where she belonged. Now with her husband, Aoud, and their son James, they boldly wear the new line everywhere they go. They have developed a company, **Red Letter English**, which goes into uptown corporations, teaching English and building community with people who get excited about the contact of God’s love through their teachers. Aoud has realized that “Thai people are ready to change their lifestyle in order to feel a sense of belonging, in order to come back home.”



In the next photo is a guy from Scarborough, Ontario. Ben. Apple and Aoud have unofficially adopted Ben as their oldest son. He was part of a short term youth team with Matt Janes a few years ago. You could say Ben got the indelible kiss of Bangkok and found himself on a flight back here after graduating from high school. By seamlessly living his Godlife with his Earthlife, Ben is pointing his Thai friends and co-workers to the activity of God as it is already in motion around them. It never fails to awe them! With his skateboard under one arm and his own line of jeans and t-shirts under the other, Ben gets into a community that most of us could never reach. He has just recently opened up his 4-story townhouse as a 'verge' or small-group meeting place.



And finally, even though there are many more, I really want to introduce you to Ryan. Three years ago his family found their way out of China, having been persecuted for their faith. They were alone, wandering the streets of Bangkok. Through a series of encounters, they met up with NewSong Bangkok. Even though he has no high



school diploma, Ryan now has a job at the Refugee Centre for the UN in Bangkok, translating and working in the medical clinic. He and his parents are waiting for the go-ahead to get residency either in Canada or the U.S. He's found brothers and sister here in this city, brothers and sisters who strangely share the same DNA. Though it's not genetic, it does go deeper. It's divine DNA.

I think that's what Aoud was talking about when he said Thai people would change their lifestyle in order to come back home. And that's what I'm talking about when I say we don't create the movement of God, but we enter into it. And that's why we are seeing people who come into a space with strangers and find them selves at home, because they suddenly realize there is a big picture and that the world is a family. And that's why we have this homeland-ness in our hearts. We are helping lead people home, back to the Father. Thank-you for supporting us. We have this incredible gift from above and because of you too to live the **Love of God** over here. Please feel free to come over and hang out with us, but be warned... you may fall in Bangkoklove!

Serving in sheer joy,

Peter and Patricia DeWit

www.newsongbangkok.net

www.impactasia.ca

NewSong Bangkok is a young third-culture church plant with a partnership with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, but works closely with NewSong Irvine (The Mothership) who planted the seed and watered it in Bangkok. Now there is a kind of brotherhood called NewSong that meets in different locations: California, Mexico, London and Bangkok in Thailand! Though we may be separated many miles apart, NewSong shares the common ground in that we believe, regardless of where we live, we are all misfits called to embrace the third culture. This third culture is our desire to develop people who feel they are not just citizens of one country but the world. Third culture people have the ability to weave in and out of multiple cultures.

NewSong is far from a perfect church. Our common ground is our weakness. Yet, in spite of our weaknesses we've discovered the liberating favor of Jesus who says His grace is made perfect in our weakness.

So what is NewSong like? We're serious about embracing this ideal of reconciliation as it deals with God and humankind. We're also passionate about addressing the



local and global concerns of justice, advocacy and the poor. We feel it is our responsibility to help lead a renaissance of community transformation among the under resourced. Moreover, the arts and beauty are important to us. Diversity is not just about being politically correct. To us it's about reflecting the very heart of God.