



Imagine
Thailand



Merry Christmas from the Doves

No matter where we are, cold, snowy Canada or hot, humid Thailand we look forward to Christmas. The day of writing is December 3, and yet we've had the Christmas tree up for a week already, Christmas carols playing through the house, cookies baked and, of course three darling boys, filled with hope about what Christmas day may bring. Tomorrow is the first Sunday of Advent, and the first candle reminds us of hope—the hope of Israel

for the promised Savior. I'm sure that, like our boys wondering if Christmas will ever come, the people of God wondered if their promised Messiah would come. Again this year, we get to remember God keeps His promises. How grateful we are that despite all the excess, Christmas is a universal reminder that God keeps His word.

The Year in Review: Cars 2! A New Home! We could have used Noah's Ark...

This year, when we look back, we too are reminded that promises are kept. 2011 has been full of intensity, victory, disappointment and joy. Yes a regular year! As a family we have especially watched our boys mature, take on new challenges, and experience life through the first time lenses of childhood. Matthew is nearly eight, and encountering the "work" side of school for the first time. He's taken on new hobbies like tennis and chess, and is a devoted big brother. Benjamin, at five, has left Thomas the Train behind and embraced Playmobile with similar abandon. He never goes halfway. He also loves school, playing with friends and swimming. Charles, two, is all personality. Flowing hair, unforgettable facial expressions, and perhaps Cars 2 biggest fan, Charlie is our resident polygot, understanding English, Thai and in French morning school. He seems to be fearless, and is determined to do everything his elder brothers can do, including jumping from the diving board!

In June, we had some urgent news that Peter's dad was hospitalized and not expected to make it. Within 4 hours Peter was on a flight back to Vancouver, and he was able to be with the family for his dad's final hours. At the age of 93, Peter's dad modeled a life of hard work and graciously living in the knowledge of a person who was given a second chance at life.

In August, we moved house, just down the street from our former location. This place was a total answer to prayer! In a city where space is at a premium, we finally have a home that is a perfect fit for our busy family, three growing boys, and a constant stream of guests, volunteers and staff. Our guest room has been occupied since the day we moved in!

In Thailand this year we have lurched between crises. Last year's Red Shirt debacle led to largely peaceful elections, but the real consequence is uncertain and somewhat ominous. The Great Flood in Oct/Nov only exacerbated the political polarization. Political inertia remains one of the main reasons this flood is so disastrous. As we live on a ground floor condo, our family was under direct flooding alert for over a month. Our building took necessary precautions and even installed a Seadoo in the front of the building as one of their strategies, which our boys thought was fun! Schools were closed for weeks;

our campus centre and office was closed; movement around the city became impossible and even shopping for groceries and necessary items became "interesting" as factories were flooded and the flow of goods into the city halted. Gratefully our street was spared flooding however even today thousands remain underwater, while hundreds of thousand are unable to return to work.



Through our partnership with churches, and groups in Thailand we have been able to provide clean drinking water to thousands of flood victims; provide food, and facilitate direct relief and evacuation. Our children (Matthew pictured at left) have also participated, and helped to organize a project with their friends from school to donate and prepare special relief packages for children affected by the flooding.

Imagine Thailand Moving Forward...

The flood is only one of the areas that Imagine Thailand has invested energy. 2011 marks a milestone in that we have also now installed 40 water systems to migrant school along the Thai-Burma border serving around 12,000 children plus their surrounding communities. We have also worked hard on providing identification "Lifebooks" for stateless children, supplemental education support in Thailand's south and Biblically based leadership training to 1200 emerging leaders. This year we have seen more children and university students come to faith, seen our wonderful team expand to over 25 (see Christmas dinner picture below) and experienced greater maturity as a ministry. We have also increased our efforts to generate income locally and have successful written grant applications to several local organizations. We also launched a "British Pie Shop" through the efforts of one of our newest colleagues, a British national, and slowly we are increasing our monthly sales, with all profits going back into



The ministry.

These funds mean that we can continue to expand our ministry and potentially also consider neighboring countries who will only grant visa's for a "business" and not a "missionary" purpose. We continue to move forward in anticipation of all that God desires to do in and through us and trust Him to bring the people and resources together in his timing. We live in the centre of such spiritual and physical needs, and yet we know that God cares and is concerned for our family, as well as our neighbors and the many in our life who do not know Him.

So from our home to yours, we want to wish you a Merry Christmas! May you know the peace of God in your hearts and homes over the Christmas season!

PS...We do have a need

PS...would you consider a special request this Christmas? First of all, thank you for your support of us and Imagine Thailand and flood relief. However, allow us to be so bold to say, our family has outgrown our 16-year-old car and is in desperate need of a larger, roadworthy vehicle to accommodate our family, as well as serve a dual purpose for repeated airport runs (80+ this year alone) as well as to help transport teams and materials around the country. We would love to purchase a mid-size van for this purpose, and need to raise a minimum of \$10,000 to make this possible. Would you consider a gift this Christmas to assist? All donations are tax-deductable, and can be made online by clicking on

Donate

*this button
purchase of a van. Thank you!*

Please note that the gift is to be used for the