

# 1015

A nighttime photograph of Bangkok, Thailand, featuring the Grand Palace and surrounding city lights. The image is partially obscured by a white diagonal shape in the top left and a green diagonal shape in the bottom right.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Transforming lives and communities through discipleship and holistic ministry to bring Buddhist Thais into the Kingdom of God.



# LETTER FROM THE MILLERS

Dear Partners,

It has been another wonderful year where we have so much to be thankful for and to praise Him for! We could not begin to describe all that He has done, but we hope with this Annual Report to share at least a glimpse of what God has been doing through us here in Thailand.

Through the various ministries that we are engaged in, we have had the privilege of baptizing one person, witnessing 42 other baptisms, worshipping alongside a handful of people who were hearing the gospel for the first time, proclaiming the gospel, serving the marginalized, and discipling many on a weekly basis.

All of this, is of course, made possible through your partnership. So let us say to you what the Apostle Paul said to Philemon: "For we have derived much joy and comfort from your love...because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you."

Matt, Bobbi Jo, Lexi, and Jude

# YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

We have co-opted Paul's words to the Philippians (below) to speak of and to all of you. There is not a day that goes by where we do not remember you, thank God for you, and pray for you. Upon first setting out on this journey, we did not know who God would use to send and sustain us. Now, having been on the field for a year and a half, it is amazing to look at the various churches and people that have partnered with us to lead Thai's to Christ and to make disciples.

It has occurred to us that we have not shared the incredible story of how our Creator has sent and sustained us in His own counterintuitive ways. Whether you have known us for a long time or are represented in the graphic below, we think you will be amazed and inspired by these numbers. These numbers remind us all to trust in Him and not lean on our own understanding:



Number of individuals supporting us that we had no prior relationship with.



Number of churches supporting us that we had no prior relationship with.



Percentage of support that comes from these churches and individuals.

**I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU, ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING MY PRAYER WITH JOY, BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW.**

*Philippians 1:3-5*

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# IT IS REQUIRED OF STEWARDS THAT THEY BE FOUND FAITHFUL.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:2

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## WHAT THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TRANSLATES TO

While we do not use the Annual Report to detail all of our incoming funds and outgoing expenses (we provide this upon request), we do want to be transparent and give you a general idea of how we are stewarding the financial resources entrusted to us. The entire report will accomplish this goal, but below we have provided, in bullet point form, a comprehensive list of our various expenses here on the field:

- Language Acquisition
- Rent and Basic Housing Costs
- Tuition/Fees for Lexi and Jude
- Micro-loans (small, interest free)
- Medical/Life Insurance
- Tairomprakhun Church Expenses
- Sex Trafficking Ministry Expenses
- Other Ministry Expenses
- VISA, Work Permit Expenses
- Retirement

# TAIROMPRAKHUN BANGKOK CHURCH

Our stated mission is to “transform lives and communities through discipleship and holistic ministry to bring Buddhist Thais into the Kingdom of God.” It is in teaching and serving the body at Tairomprakhun that we are primarily doing this. What began as Matt teaching once a week, just eighteen months ago, has become full-fledged ministry.

Matt is currently leading the weekly international worship service, teaching the Word to a “small” group of 30 people, teaching the college-aged class on Thursday nights, and occasionally teaching the entire church in the Bible study hour following the main worship service. He has been asked to teach at one of the main sessions during the annual church conference and he has been officially recognized as a teaching minister and leader of the church. This is the first time in the church’s 25 year history that a westerner has been given the role and responsibilities that Matt has been given.

Bobbi Jo is actively serving the church as well. For several months we taught an English class at the church together and we will begin a new English class in January geared toward non-believers who attend the nearby university. Bobbi Jo will also co-ordinate a VBS-style program this April that will give children in the community who have never heard the gospel an opportunity to hear it for the first time.





# COLLEGE-AGED MINISTRY AT TAIROMPRAKHUN BANGKOK CHURCH

It is Matt's honor to teach the college-aged group on Thursday nights. Though they are all close in age, the group is very diverse. Some members come from Christian homes, others were Buddhists while in college and abandoned to Christ, and still others are contemplating whether or not Jesus is Lord. Matt, then, loves teaching this group more so than any other because it gives him the opportunity to edify and equip the saved while simultaneously proclaiming the gospel to the lost.



# SMALL GROUP TEACHING AND THE NICKNAME 'JAAK JAI JING'

Every Sunday Matt teaches about 30 people following the worship service. This is the first time in the 25 year history of the church that a non-Thai has been asked to fill the role of teaching minister. Matt is absolutely humbled by this and has been teaching through the whole Bible. He began with Genesis 1 and is currently in the book of Joshua. This class is made up of the most spiritually mature believers in the church.

One of the coolest things that has happened over the past couple months is that the people have come up with a nickname for Matt. They are now calling him, "Jàak Jai Jing," which means "from the heart." This is fascinating because Matt is still doing most of his teaching in English with a translator by his side. Even though the majority of the listeners do not know what Matt is saying until they hear the translation in Thai, they can apparently recognize that he is teaching "from the heart."





# INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Since July of last year, Matt has been leading the international group at Tairomprakhun Bangkok Church. TIF, as we call it, is held every Sunday afternoon and is designed for all who desire to corporately worship God and study His Word in English. In this calendar year, our group has included people from Thailand, America, Canada, England, Australia, China, Vietnam, Ghana, Brazil, and Cameroon.

For the past eighteen months, our group has met on Sunday afternoons in a small classroom. In 2018, however, we will be moving the service to Sunday mornings and meeting in a much larger space. Tairomprakhun will have two worship services running concurrently, one service in English and the other in Thai. This will allow the church to reach more English-speaking people in the community and Matt is, of course, happy to preach in his native tongue. This service is tentatively schedule to launch January 21st.

# TEACHING ENGLISH AT TAIROMPRAKHUN

One of the ways that we have served the body of believers at Tairomprakhun has been to simply teach English. Intermittently, we have been teaching English on Sunday afternoons. It has not only been a blessing to the people who desire to be more marketable in the workplace, but also it's been a great blessing to us. Teaching English has helped us to build relationships with more people and also to practice our Thai.

In January, we will launch an English class for students who attend Ramkhamhaeng University here in Bangkok. Since the university is within walking distance to the church, we are anticipating that many students will come. As they come, our hope and prayer is that the class would serve as a bridge to ultimately lead these students to Christ.





# SAMARITAN CREATIONS

## MINISTRY TO VICTIMS OF THE SEX TRADE

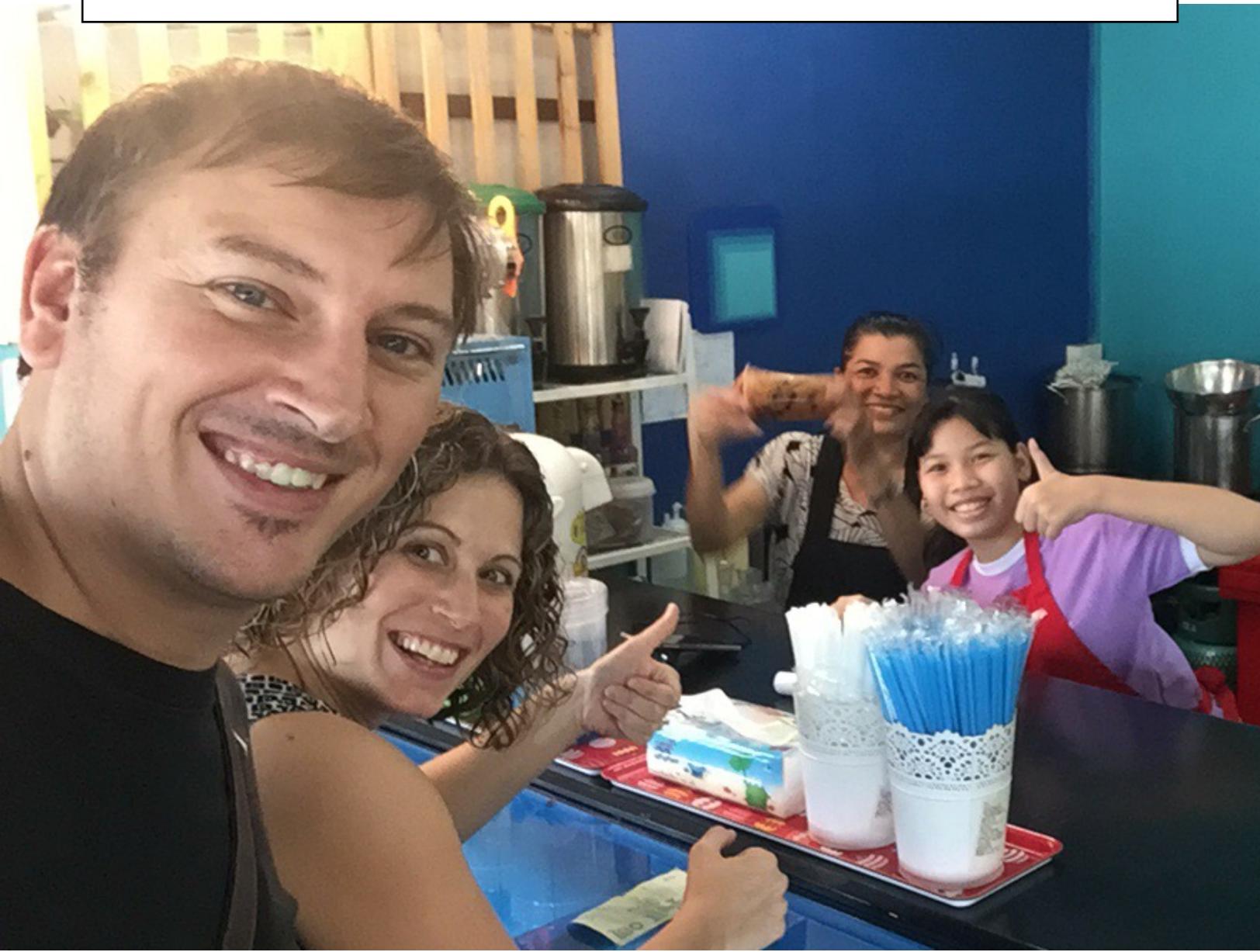
Samaritan Creations stated purpose is “to rescue, restore, and empower women ensnared by the sex trade in Thailand with the grace and love of God.” They are doing this by building relationships with sex workers, providing fair trade employment so that the women can leave the bars, and discipling them every step of the way. Matt has been serving as the Director of Discipleship and Bobbi Jo has been serving as the Volunteer and Events Co-ordinator.

As you can see, our team has been growing. Jada (pictured far left) will be with us for the next two years, while Currie and Mary Blake (seated next to us) will come back in June to serve for two years. This year we have much too celebrate regarding this mission. Read on for the details.

# WEEO: PROUD NEW OWNER OF A BUBBLE TEA SHOP

For the past six years, Weeo has been employed by Samaritan Creations as the Café Manager. While most of the women under the ministry's care are victims of the sex trade, Weeo was a victim of domestic abuse. Through the work of Samaritan Creations, she came to know Christ and be found in Him, while also gaining invaluable skills. When we talk about taking a "holistic approach" to ministry, this is precisely what we mean.

Now, through an opportunity that only God could have made possible, Weeo has become a small-business owner. She owns and operates Bubble Tea Shop, located right down the street from the ministry. This is what sustainability looks like!





# NOEY: NEW LANDOWNER AND ASPARAGUS FARMER

Noey has been with Samaritan Creations for eleven years. She became a Christian about ten years ago, and this year saw her husband and mother-in-law be baptized. Noey is one of our favorite women to talk to and we have learned more about Thai culture from her than anyone else. She is pictured here on an asparagus farm in her rural hometown.

In partnership with Samaritan Creations, we were able to provide Noey with a micro-loan towards the purchase of her very own land. Next Spring, Noey will move from Bangkok to Korat (3 /12 hours north-east). She will be trained by her Aunt on how to be a successful asparagus farmer, before planting asparagus on her own land. Her purpose in doing this it not to make money or to have a better life, but rather to share the gospel with her extended family. Noey is a disciple-making disciple.

# NEW KIDS SPACE AT SAMARITAN CREATIONS CAFÉ

In October, we approached Mike and Kay (the founders of Samaritan Creations) about turning a showroom space at the café into a kids area. We did this because we knew that there was a desire within this community for a place where moms could gather, while not having to worry about keeping the kids entertained. Well, they gave us the green light and we designed the space that you see below.

Since opening the kids space in November, business at the café has increased and new customers are coming in. Samaritan Creation's Café is now the only coffee shop in this part of Bangkok that has a space dedicated to toddlers.





# INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

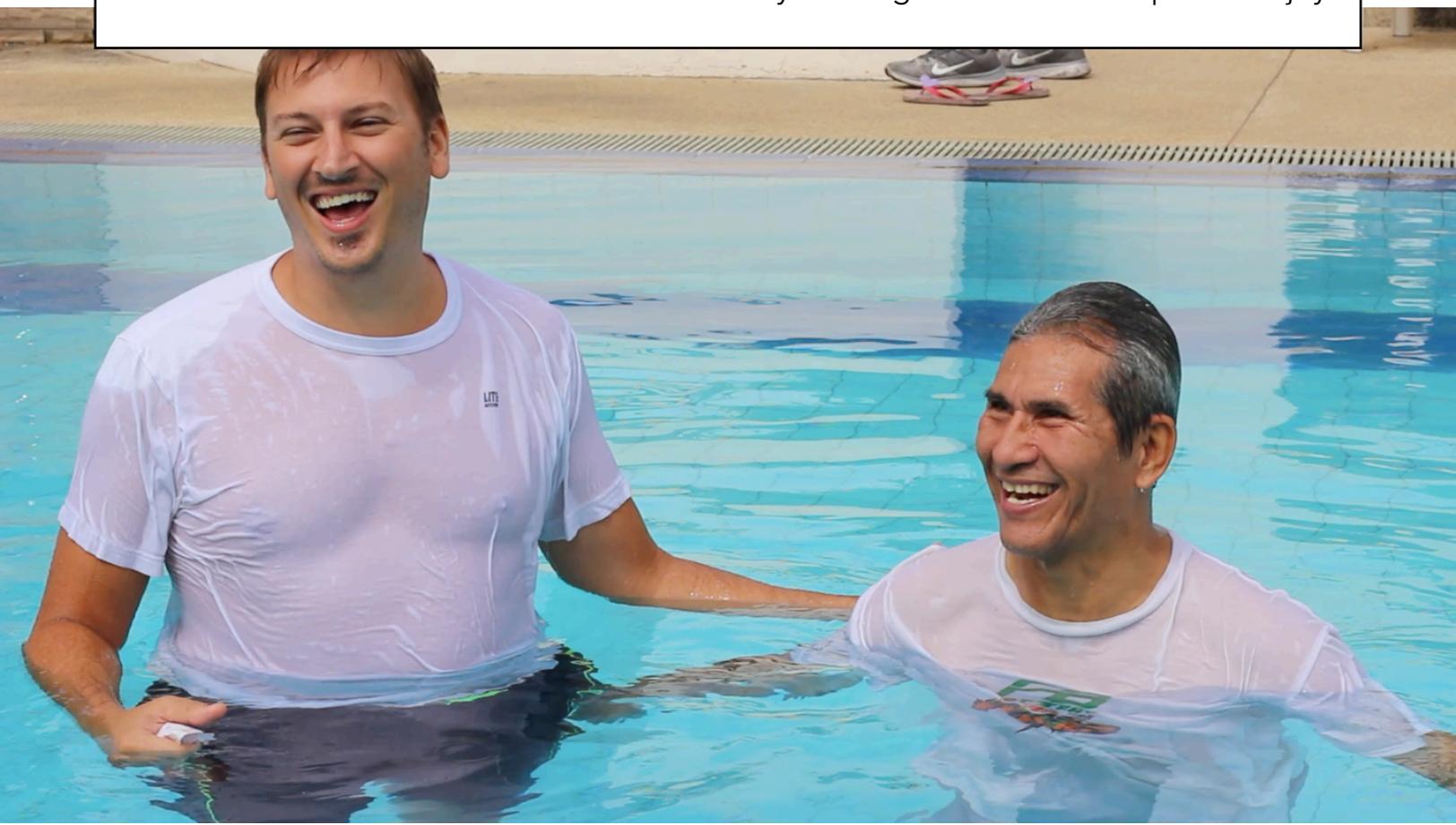
In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." This command informs us that we should be very intentional in every relationship that we are in, with the end result being the glorification of God. Here, in a place that is so full of darkness and where the vast majority of people have not heard the gospel nor have any knowledge of their Creator, we try to take Jesus' words to heart.

Last year, we told you about some of the people that we have met and built relationships with here in Bangkok. This year, we want to give you an update on two of those people and also talk about someone else we have had a chance to spend some time with. As we sit here and read last year's Annual Report, we are moved by what God has done through these relationships. Our hope is that you would be moved as well and that you would be encouraged to intentionally build and nurture relationships where you are with the knowledge that with God all things are possible.

# WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH OUR FRIEND CHOK

If you have been keeping up with us through the newsletters and Facebook or heard us speak over the summer, then the picture below is not news to you. Last March, Matt had the awesome privilege of baptizing Chok. The smile on Chok's face after rising out of the water expresses how all of us feel about Chok and his new life in Christ: we have an unspeakable joy. As a good friend of ours said during our furlough in the States – God has used a man who was once an unbelieving, punk kid from Cincinnati, to disciple and baptize a taxi driver in Bangkok. What a mighty God we serve!

Baptism should never be the end of the story. It is supposed to be the beginning. So it has been our prayer that Chok would not keep the gospel to himself, but be transformed by it and begin to transform the people around him. Well, guess what? Chok's wife, Ponloppi, has been worshipping with Chok's church for the past four months. She attends the women's prayer group and the worship service every Sunday. She is a lifelong Buddhist, but week after week she is hearing the gospel and encountering people, Chok included, who are living it out. Would you please pray for her? We are confident that God will use her story to bring about more inexpressible joy.





# ROB AND CHIN CHIN

We introduced you to Rob and Chin Chin in last year's Annual Report. Rob is British and Chin Chin is Taiwanese. They have two lovely daughters, Maisie and Caia. We met Chin Chin in language school, our very first month on the field, and our relationship with these guys has been blossoming ever since. Rob identifies as a Christian, having grown up in the Anglican Church in the UK, but lives as a practical atheist. Chin Chin, meanwhile, is a nominal Buddhist. In the last year and a half, we have grown closer and closer to them and hopefully opened their eyes to the grace and love of God.

Rob and Chin Chin are pictured here watching a Christmas concert at a local church. This was the first time that Chin Chin had heard the story of Jesus' birth. Please pray that we would have more opportunities to both share and live out the gospel with them.

# OUR OLD FRIEND SUDARAT

If you attended one of our presentations back in 2015-16, then you remember our dear friend Sudarat. She is the woman we met almost ten years ago, while teaching in Bangkok. We had given her a Bible right before we went back to America, and have desired to talk to her about the God whom she was reading about ever since.

In our first year on the field, it was difficult to spend any meaningful time with Sudarat. We had some issues with transportation and our schedule was a bit too demanding. Well, since returning from furlough, we have made it a priority to rebuild this relationship. Now, we bring her stir-fried rice with crab (her favorite) every week and have lunch with her. Please pray that as we demonstrate the love of Christ and talk to her about the Creator, that she would embrace Him the way that she has embraced us.





# LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

If you are reading this and you are not young and single, we have some advice: do not try to learn another language! We are joking, of course, but this has easily been one of the most difficult components of our ministry here. Matt is now reading, writing, and speaking in Thai, and Bobbi Jo, perhaps because she is a much better listener than Matt, has incredible comprehension. More often than not, we find ourselves working as a team. Bobbi Jo tells Matt what people say, then he responds to them in Thai!

This is the one area that we could really use prayer for. We can have basic conversations and have solid, practical Thai. We cannot, however, teach the Bible in Thai or converse very well in conversations when we don't know the context. Please pray that we would have patience, endurance, and resolve as we continue to learn this difficult language. We can, and have, ministered to people with the language skills that we currently have, but our goal is to become fluent.

# CONSTRUCTION OF HOPE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

*lifesong*  
FOR ORPHANS





## CONSTRUCTION OF HOPE

Construction of Hope began in 2012 in Thailand with the desire to share the gospel with migrant construction workers from Cambodia. This desire developed into partnerships with indigenous churches in Thailand and Cambodia to provide education, discipleship, and holistic care for children and to support families through biblical teaching and sustainable business opportunities.

Over the last two months, we have been volunteering with this ministry and loving every minute that we spend with these children. The American co-founder of Construction of Hope is looking for missionaries who can take over the ministry as he and his family prepare to return, permanently, to the States. He has asked us if we would be interested, and we are currently praying about this. Would you be in prayer with us? We would still continue to do all of our work at Tairomprakhun, but if we take on this responsibility, it will mean that we do very little with Samaritan Creations. Please pray that God would make it clear to us what He would have us do.



## LEXI AND JUDE

As we did last year, we would like to conclude the Annual Report with a note about the children. Thailand has very much become their home and they have adapted as well as a child possibly could. Lexi had her struggles in the first year, but through your prayers and the help and encouragement of so many both in the States and here in Thailand, she is doing great. Jude is now in Kindergarten and is doing wonderfully both socially and educationally. We could not be more proud of these Lexi and Jude and love the people that God is molding them into.

Please pray for both of them as they continue to adjust to life overseas. As they have grown older, they have become more aware of how different their lives and circumstances are from their cousins and friends back in the States. They seem to take it in stride and they definitely understand the sacrifice that we have asked them to make. Still, they are children, who miss their friends and extended families. Please pray for them whenever you think of us.

