



CHRIST CHURCH

### Letter from Revd. Peter Cook

Included in this Border news is an annual letter to our donors thanking them for their support in 2009, how much it was appreciated and how much that support is needed again this year.

The letter also highlights how unstable the political situation has been in recent months along the border which has had a direct effect on Noh Bo village.

It also tells of the urgent need we have for volunteer teachers for the 2010 school year.

These are explained in greater detail in the Border News, but for more information please feel free to contact us directly. We would love to hear from you.

### Please Pray for the Border.

- Pray for the political situation along the border for the villages on both sides.
- Pray that the Burmese elections due to be held later in the year will not be an excuse for more violence.
- Pray for the graduating students and their futures. Some will be returning to Burma, some to refugee camps and some relocating to America.
- Give thanks for the great volunteers we have had at Noh Bo this last academic school year.



# BORDER NEWS



## A different perspective...

Last week I left Noh Bo Academy in an empty air conditioned van. Leaving at the same time were two very overcrowded small trucks, crammed with students. There was standing room only, no room for anyone to sit, and they would go without shade in 37°C heat until they reached the refugee camp about an hour away. I was going the same way, right past the camp, but was advised by the school not to take any with me, as most of these students had no ID papers or official travelling documents. At the check points we would have been stopped and while we could have probably argued our way out of the situation, our van would have been highlighted as a security risk for aliens, which could jeopardize our future work on the border.

Working with the Karen, I am continually challenged to try and see the world through their eyes. Their lack of 'home', their lack of rights, their lack of freedoms and yet their resilience is so inspiring. There is nothing quite like sitting talking with women who have been in a refugee camp for 15 years to see your own life from a different perspective.

Kerry Verkade (Karen ministries co-ordinator)

## GIVING THANKS...

"Ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." Ephesians 1: 15-16

I recently read this verse from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and it immediately brought to mind a number of the past Noh Bo Academy students. A student once said to me that he 'hoped he could be a Christian one day...' but struggled with the idea of giving over his whole life to Jesus. When he finished school however, he moved to America and has recently committed his whole life to Jesus. Since hearing about his faith in the Lord, my heart has been full of joy and cannot stop giving thanks to God.

It has also been encouraging to see a number of other students growing in their faith since graduating. They have an overflowing love for their own people and work in schools, churches and with NGO's in the refugee camps and surrounding areas.

Often we might pray for the Karen ministry, or give financially having a picture in our heads that what we are offering is going towards a persecuted ethnic group - and this is very true. However, we also need to remember that the ministry we support is bringing the good news of Jesus, not to a faceless group of people, but to individuals who need Jesus. Praise God that he is working amongst the Karen on the Thai-Burmese border.

Serena Langenbrunch  
Volunteer at Noh Bo Academy



## REFUGEE CAMPS

### *MAE LA CAMP*

On a recent trip to the refugee camp we were able to spend time with Peh Lu and her dedicated team of teachers. Christmas and New Year had been a very busy time for them but also a great time of celebration. Peh Lu's sister who she hadn't seen in ten years was visiting her and the time they had together was very special. Her sister has since returned to Burma.

Two of the head teachers in the kindergartens are due to give birth in the next few weeks and then the school will start to wind down for the year. Closing ceremonies will be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> March when everyone will have a well deserved break during the hot season.

On this visit we were able to spend time at St John's preschool and see the finished toilets that had been upgraded. They were teaching a health unit on cleanliness and hygiene, so Corina, the head teacher, was very grateful they were able to model that with a new toilet block.

We were also able to give funding for the Emmanuel preschool for them to upgrade their toilet facilities.



### **THANG SONG YANG**

As we reported in the last Border news, a group of 300 Karen families crossed the border and made their way into Thailand in June last year. They have set up a 'temporary' camp right behind Noh Bo Academy.

They are hoping to be able return back to their village in Burma, but at this stage it looks unlikely that it will be safe enough for them to be able to do this. A few returned around Christmas time to check on their crops and unfortunately walked across newly laid landmines. Two of them exploded causing severe injuries.

The Thai government scheduled a voluntary repatriation for them to be sent back on the 15<sup>th</sup> February, but pressure put on by NGO's saw the plan halted, at least temporarily.

Please pray they won't be deported until their safety can be guaranteed.

## Student Spotlight.....Toe Hla

As we come closer to the end of the school year, many of the Noh Bo Academy graduating students are unsure of what the future will hold for them.

Toe Hla is venturing into particularly unfamiliar territory and will soon be moving to America with his family. They are currently in the UN refugee process and have recently gone through their final interviews and medical checks.

Toe Hla is really gifted - he is intelligent, hard working, a strong leader and has a very deep heart for God and for the Karen people. This year, he has been translating in bible class for the western volunteers and has taken on leadership roles in nearly all of the school events. He hopes to become a doctor in the future and to help his people.

Please pray for Toe Hla and his family as they move to America. Pray that America would provide opportunities for him to grow in his faith and to use the skills that God has given him. Also please pray that God would surround the family with people to encourage them in their transition.



To save postage costs we would love to be able to send you your copy of the Border News by email. If you received this one via the post and have internet access, please let us know so we can email future newsletters directly to you. [karenministry@christchurchbangkok.org](mailto:karenministry@christchurchbangkok.org)

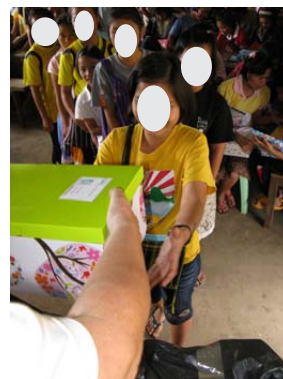
# THANKS - THEY WERE TRULY WRAPPED!



A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal. While we didn't receive as many boxes as we did last year, we did receive some generous financial contributions that we used to make up the extra 50 boxes we needed for the students at Noh Bo. Through a special deal we were able to make up boxes containing a polar fleece blanket, shoes, stationery items and some snack food.

It was a very special day when we played 'Father Christmas' and handed them out to every student in the school and to the teacher's children as well. They were really excited to receive their brightly wrapped gifts and there was so much laughter and joy as they showed each other their boxes of goodies. Let's just say not much teaching went on that afternoon as they were somewhat distracted!

One of the volunteer teachers told us of how the next day, students showed up to class proudly wearing their new T-shirts, caps and shoes and clutching their new stationery. Also there were reports that in the dorms there was much late night snacking as the food and sweets were shared out. Particular highlights were the brain puzzles and Rubik cubes that kept many of the teenagers (and teachers) enthralled for hours. So thank you!



## *VOLUNTEERS NEEDED....*

*The new school year at Noh Bo Academy starts in June 2010 and we need volunteer English teachers. While a TESOL qualification would be helpful, it is not necessary as what the students really need is conversational English practice. There will also be opportunities for participating in Bible talks, teaching computers and playing sports. Minimum time commitment would be 1 month but you could stay as long as 9 months.*

*Are You Interested in Teaching  
at Noh Bo Academy?  
Please contact us at*

[karenministry@christchurchbangkok.org](mailto:karenministry@christchurchbangkok.org)

## How can I support the Karen ministry at the border?



Organizations, churches and individuals can give to our General Karen Refugee Fund, which enables us to respond to the regular monthly needs and also any special needs that arise. Our yearly budget is in the region of 2.7 million Baht (£51,000 / US\$81,000 / AU\$93,500 / Euro55,000). Noh Bo accounts for about two thirds of this – the refugee camp ministry about one third.

Costs include: teacher salaries, food, uniforms, health, toiletries, education equipment, building maintenance, utilities and travel.

Below is the cost to support a child at the orphanage, nursery and Noh Bo Academy for a term. You can see what a real difference your support can make to individual lives.

## Make a difference:

<b>Noh Bo Academy</b>	<b>Thai Baht</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>US\$</b>	<b>Aus\$</b>	<b>Euro</b>
School fees for day student	3000B/term	55	90	110	67
School fees for boarding student	6000B/term	110	180	220	134
School fees for day student	6000B/year	110	180	220	134
School fees for boarding student	12000B/year	220	360	440	268
<b>Mae La Camp:</b>					
Sponsoring a nursery student	1600B/ year	30	50	60	36
Sponsoring an Orphanage Child	5120B/ year	100	160	200	116

## How to make a donation:

If you are able, please use the enclosed payment information form. Cheques made out in foreign currency attract high transfer fees in Thailand and can be difficult to process. Your willingness to make your gift available in Thai Baht would be greatly appreciated. Most banks will usually arrange this. Electronic transfer is best and quicker.

### **Bank account details are as follows:**

**Name:** Christ Church Refugee Account

**Number:** 001-006-59276

**Bank:** Standard Chartered Bank (Thai),

90 North Sathorn Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

**Swiftcode:** SCBLTHBX

## Contact Details

**Address:** Christ Church Bangkok, 11 Convent Road, Bangkok, 10500, Thailand

**Tel:** (+662) 234-3634

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