

P.O.Box 44, Nakorn Sawan , 60000. Thailand

Dear Ray,

March, April and May are the hottest months of the year. There has not been anything but cloudless skies for several months and the last time it rained must have been the end of October. This year promised to be hotter than ever and sure enough it has been. March got hot very quickly and April has just been unrelenting in its heat. Most nights we go to bed with a temperature in the house at 98F. We wake up to about 92F. During the day the temperature rises to about 109F in the shade. What is the most draining of all is the high humidity that comes with the heat. This last Sunday was almost too much in the church. In the UK we put the boiler on to get warm: here you put the air-conditioners on to get cool. We had all four air conditioners going on Sunday but the temperature just would not come down very much at all. We put the air on when it was 92 and it came down to 84. But with us all singing at the top of our voices it was roasting with each one of us churning our BTU by the score. It got better when the kids went out to junior church but it was still uncomfortable right through the service.



The situation here is still "hot" on the streets of Bangkok. There are now no go areas for police and the army and those in opposition to the government seem to want to bring as much violence and chaos to the streets as they can. There have been a few killed with grenades and what are called "war weapons". Soldiers together with the general public have been killed. The violence has spread to up country with these so called people fighting for democracy preventing travel on the highways. It has gotten quite tense and shocking as whole convoys of police have been prevented from travelling and a train convoy of army vehicles needed in the troubled south was unable to leave the depot. The British Embassy has warned British nationals to stay clear of all tense spots but alas three foreigners have been killed.

The beginning of April saw a major milestone for the future of our church accomplished. I have always kept my eye on the finishing line ie retirement and have been working so that the church would be fully indigenous. Other churches we have planted over the first few terms are fully run and financed by Thais. Each church has been placed in a Thai Pentecostal organization which we have had fellowship with over all the years we have been here. In accordance with their constitution we have let Pastor Yuphin and Pastor Song apply for credentials. Both started their journey in developing their call and gifts in preaching and teaching as licensed preachers. Then Yuphin moved up to be a Minister in Training. And this April she was ordained as a Pastor. Song moved up to the position of Minister in Training. It was a wonderful occasion. We went to Bangkok for the meeting where in total about twenty people were ordained. We as a church stayed on for a seminar that followed. We had the best of fellowship even though the hotel we stayed in - a tenner per night, (which may give you the picture of what it was really like - not five star by any means) didn't seem to dowse our spirits.

There was an extra blessing too in that there were three other people from the places where we had church planted who were also ordained. Twenty eight years ago we worked in a small village church where there was no running water, only wells, and no electricity and where we took a stand up shower with sweat running down every time we preached in the hot season. No fans! - and we never gave it a minutes thought. I mean that was "real" missionary life. From this church a wee guy whose mum and dad went to church. It is amazing what the grace of God can do to a kid who would not stop chattering as you preached and ran about like somebody not right. Two others were from the church in Korat where we church planted in our second term. They were late teenagers at the time and never missed meetings. It was such a blessing to be part of what God as done in them and what He is still perfecting.

With love
Tony & Ursula