

Greetings from sunny Chiang Mai -

The rains are long gone, pollution is building, and the cool season is tip-toeing away. Still, it is very pleasant here as we continue working. I am looking forward to the year ahead with hope which must mean that God has been busy in my heart while I was resting and relaxing over the holidays. His activity in our inner world is no less dynamic than in our outer world. Indulging in a little poetry ... sails catching the divine wind, crashing into the night storm, toward the onrushing day, hearing his song - yes, that just about sums it up for me. Unless my memory has failed again, I think the Chinese call a typhoon a divine wind. That gives the idea that the divine wind is wonderfully irresistible, doesn't it?

Boundary crossing into the new year is a time to evaluate the past and plan for what is ahead. I asked Janice to include a summary of books checked in her last newsletter that showed that we had collaborated in checking Bible books and portions for people speaking 13 languages in 5 different countries. But what does the year ahead hold for us? I added a couple of projects to our faith budget. Our grandson is four years old and while we enjoy skype with him, we long for personal contact. If you want to earmark funds to help make that personal desire a reality, please do so. We are planning a trip to the US in June for work and vacation. Toward the end of last year, our computers began to show their age by giving us trouble as they approach the end of their warranty lives, so we hope to replace one while we are in the US. The world has changed as we carry around our office, library, work tools, correspondence and personal life in a small box that allows us to respond to our multi-location and varied-activity work demands. Contributing to computer replacement is another project some might want to support.

Usually I prefer not to write about finances. But I know it is very much an issue in the world around us with the European economy collapsing and the US struggling. This was brought home again with news that our son-in-law lost his high tech computer job recently. My view on financial management is simple - avoid credit card debt at all costs, minimize ongoing monthly expenses, and give wisely. None of those is particularly easy to do. In 2009 when our support was eroding because of the economic turndown, God challenged me to give more. Now, I may be a little on the slow side sometimes but I am not deaf so I agreed with God and did it. We went home to see if God would rebuild our support base ... and he did. We found many churches and individuals struggling financially but others like you responded with amazing generosity. Since then, you and others like you have carried us through these difficult years. Sure, things happen that make it a challenge to maintain our level of giving. Somehow, and I am still not quite sure how, we make it through those months. But I am sure that God is faithful. Finding and responding to His direction in giving is important.

Are you aware of concerns about how some are translating familial terms like Son of God or God the Father for Muslim language communities? In the 5 countries where I am the translation coordinator and a senior translation consultant, there has been only one project where this might be an issue. Luke was translated before the controversy came up, and familial terms were used. Both Janice and I support the use of familial terms.

Our Payap courses are going well. I have a paper to prepare for a conference in Bangkok for area translation coordinators and consultants in February. After finishing up at Payap, I am looking forward to checking 1 Corinthians & some Old Testament material in March. Then in April I have three professional update sessions to prepare for our group conference. Please keep us in your prayers.

Whatever dark days you have experienced, look up, tighten your belt, strengthen your resolve, and put your hand in the hand of that man from Galilee again. Joy and peace refresh you in Christ.