

Ron & Cheryl Myers

GOD'S WORD FOR ISAN NEWSLETTER

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A Faith-based Ministry Sustained Through the Prayers and Partnership of God's People

Rice in the Fields and the Fish in the Water *Isn't Our Creator Wonderful*

By Ron Myers

Greetings In The Matchless Name Of The Lord Jesus Christ,

Upon moving from our remote village home among the ethnic Nyaw people in the northern hinterlands of Nakhon Phanom province, we relocated to the provincial capital city to begin the Isan New Testament translation. This was also an opportunity to expand the scope of our village outreach to an unreached area where the Phu-Thai people lived, 50 kilometers to the south. My translation assistant Jarat and I traveled to the Phu-Thai area each Saturday to present the Gospel message—whereupon many believed and were baptized. Later, while doing translation work, I was asked to assist a young missionary family who desired to locate in one of the many ethnic Phu-Thai villages.

While helping the new missionary family get settled, I got to know quite a few of their Phu-Thai neighbors—speaking with them briefly about God and creation. Time passed and my job of helping the missionary family came to a close as they settled in and began learning the Phu-Thai language. A few months later, Mr. Niw, one of the villagers with whom I had become acquainted contacted me, asking me to come back to explain more about the things I had told them about the Gospel. This *never* occurs with hard-line Theravada Buddhists, like the Thai. Yet, miraculously, it *was* happening because my speaking with them earlier had piqued genuine interest.

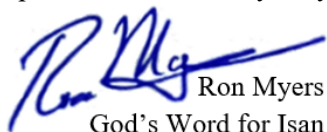
What a unique opportunity! I made arrangements to meet with Mr. Niw's interested group each Saturday. Riding my 125cc Honda trail bike the 50-plus kilometers, I began to teach them weekly. Like most Asians, these people have no comprehension of Biblical truths about origins (or have various misconceptions) which we who grew up with a Judeo-Christian world view take for granted—like the knowledge of creation or a Creator God. The Phu-Thai worldview did not include any of these essentials; so, I commenced by introducing creation and the Creator.

On a side note: When Christians in typical fashion tell the Thai that, "*God loves them and Jesus died for their sins*" it usually falls on deaf ears. Their typical response is, "*All religions are good because they teach us to be good.*" They reply in that manner because their works-based religious world view does not provide them with any knowledge about a Creator, or why they need the Gospel. Therefore, one must provide the missing information first, like the Apostle Paul did in his presentation to the educated heathen on Mars Hill (Acts 17). Paul's listeners were not uneducated or ignorant, but they're knowledge did not include Biblical truth. As such, Paul had to begin at the beginning, as we must do in Thailand.

On my first teaching trip there, I was greeted warmly by a room full of Phu-Thai husbands and wives. I had begun to study their language previously, while evangelizing with Jarat, so I spoke with them using both Phu-Thai and Isan, but mostly the trade language Isan, which they understood, and of which I was more fluent. After preliminaries, I began my introduction. A few stragglers that came out of curiosity made some remarks as they got up and left. Whereupon, my host, Mr. Niw, told me not to pay any attention to them, and to continue. As I progressed, each week I was greeted warmly by the same hungry souls who always listened attentively. By then, I had introduced creation and the Creator and what He was like. Things were progressing marvelously, to where I sensed that a new church would soon be established. I also sensed the great responsibility I had in presenting the truth to these hungry people in a way they could readily understand and believe.

On my following Saturday, while dismounting my Honda trail bike, I was approached by one of my students—the man who owned the building I had helped convert into a workable living quarters for the new missionary family. Teary eyed, he began: "*See that new rice growing in my field? Our Creator gave us that rice so we could have food to eat. Isn't our Creator wonderful! We didn't know before. Thank you so much for coming to tell us.*" He continued; "*See that water in my field? There are fish in that water. Our Creator gave us those fish, so we could have food to eat. Isn't our Creator wonderful! We didn't know before. Thank you so much for telling us.*" Interestingly, his mentioning *rice in the fields* and *fish in the water* is the Thai version of the biblical phrase, "A land flowing with milk and honey," occurring 18 times in the Old Testament.

Regrettably, due to a situation beyond my control, that was the last time I saw that little group of Phu-Thai villagers, so hungry for the truth. Knowing that would be my last visit, I poured my heart out as I moved ahead and presented the Gospel. The next time I was able to visit that same village was years later. Upon inquiring of the group's whereabouts I was told that most of them had passed on into eternity. My only hope is that I had imparted sufficient biblical truth by then for them to believe and be saved.


Ron Myers
God's Word for Isan

Jesus, in His parable about the Nobleman who was about to travel to a distant land (Luke 19), gave each of his ten servants a mina (a huge sum) and told each of them to occupy until he returned. As Christians, we too should each be occupied personally in some way to help get the Gospel to the unreached masses until Christ's soon return. Please join me in prayer for the unreached masses in Thailand, like the Phu-Thai people.