

April/May 2014



## The Stubenrauch Family

Serving the people of Thailand

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors,  
as though God were making His appeal  
through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf;  
Be reconciled to God. -II Cor. 5:20*

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'Sawadee kha' from Thailand. That means 'hello' if you've forgotten! This month marked our yearly journey back down to the far south where we lived our first 9.5 years in Thailand. First, we actually had to attend a meeting for our foundation in Chiang Mai, a city about 6 hours north of us. While we were there Mercy was also able to visit her orthodontist. Yippee! Then we began a three day trip to the south. When we finally arrived, we spent the better part of a week preparing paperwork for and submitting our yearly visa extension and work permit request. This is a very necessary and time consuming part of missionary work that is not usually mentioned. Someone has asked me to explain this for you all, so I'll try to give you a short synopsis. It is truly not my intention to complain but to give you a bit of the reality of the visa process that we missionaries tend to gloss over in our newsletters. Visa time is taxing emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially. Traveling 3 days (about 24 hours driving time) with 5 children under the age of 11 is an adventure. Gas stations, hotels, roadside food stalls and the occasional "real" restaurant. The cost of diesel and visas alone were around \$1000. Spending hours and hours at immigration with 5 children while trying to figure out what the immigration officers want THIS year is draining. Oh and did I mention its about 100 degrees everyday (no central air) because its hot season? We try, try, try to keep our joy, but I'll be honest, it's a challenge sometimes. The flip side, for us, is that we were able to fellowship with the believers in the village of Ban Pru where we lived and helped plant the church and visit old friends. Brian taught the Word the two Sundays we were there and led their weekly prayer meetings. We were able to spend Easter Sunday with them this year which was especially encouraging for me, personally. We stayed upstairs in the church during our time there and saw our sweet brothers and sisters everyday as the church is their favorite place to be all week. Asia and Mercy were thrilled to be reunited with their friends and played every waking moment with Uwan and Too. After our time there, we stopped by the beach to spend a week resting at a missionary guest house. The kids swam and played with other missionary kids living in Cambodia and had a sea kayak trip to a nearby island with daddy. On the way home, we stopped to visit with our sweet missionary friends in Korat for some English fellowship. The Hoar family gave Mercy another puppy to replace her dog that died while we were away on this trip. We always seem to be driving home from somewhere with at least one animal in or on the truck. After over one month of travel, we were SO very happy to be home. I counted 8 different beds that I slept in while we were gone. I love my bed. I love my cool mountain nights. I love waking up to see green mountains full of rice and corn fields. Incidentally, the view from our bedroom and kitchen window at the church in Ban Pru included the men's urinals behind 7Eleven and about 30 acres of concrete. Creepy, right?

I tried to take as many pictures of our different foods and adventures as I could this month so that I could give you sort of a photo journal of our travels. We hope you enjoy! Please keep praying for us! It is vital to this Great Commission and to our family. We are still looking for reasonably priced land. Will you also join with us in prayer for God's perfect will and leading?

Love from the Thailand trenches,

The Stubenrauch Family





*A typical gas station bathroom...we visited a LOT of 'em.*



*Dried fish for your traveling pleasure? There's no Wendy's drive thru on this trip!*



*Or perhaps you'd rather have hard cooked eggs? HOT off the coals.*



*There's always sausage with spices, glass noodles and chunks of pork fat for the road...instead of a bag of Doritos.*



*Imported German chocolate? Yes, please.*



*Breakfast on the road. Steamed corn cakes expertly wrapped in banana leaves.*



*Sweet, cold, very conveniently pre-cut pineapple. A big perk!*



*Micah's favorite food : Somtham! Raw green papaya salad with raw garlic, peanuts, tomatoes, lime juice and cane sugar. He would seriously eat this stuff everyday.*



*Chinese dim sum. It is delicious. It is in Hat Yai. We miss it. A lot.*



*Homeschool at immigration? We're just crazy like that. : )*