We have been in Thailand for almost three months now, and we are settling into our respective roles that we were called here to fill. It has been a seemingly slow process at times, but we are encouraged by the Bible text that advises us to "not despise the day of small beginnings" (Zech. 4:10). So, with that, we would like to share with you some of what we have been doing.

The first set built for the All-Asia TV Studio (or All-Asia Media Center) has had it's first use. Two local presenters have been to the studio already. One pastor came to discuss possibilities of filming a series that he has developed. That project is still in planning stages, and needs prayer for it's accomplishment. The Studio team filmed the other speaker as he preached about two thrilling topics, the history of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and a sermon entitled, "Is God a Murderer?" Bill Osborn was busy editing those sermons just prior to his furlough.

The other major project completed in these months was building a new set; it is a modest kitchen set, in which we hope to film health programs and cooking programs. It is complete with a propane stovetop, plenty of counter-space and...
cupboards, a small refrigerator, and a working kitchen sink. Venie Osborn and Annabelle Bell decorated it with red stoneware dishes, pictures of fruit, and other accessories. We are excited about the possibilities for this new set!

Daniel has been working on the studio network and computer systems. The room that was built to be the production control room is now functional. A large, sturdy computer desk was built by Ian (a longtime missionary from Australia), and Daniel has set up the control room computers on it. Just a few days ago, he drilled a hole in the wall and ran the video cables from the cameras in the studio into the control room. Now, the person manning the video switcher will be able to work from the quiet of this room. Daniel is also working on a lighting control setup, too.

The control room wall covering still needs to be finished. Currently, the walls have the sound-absorbing foam that was needed to reduce the echo from the concrete walls. However, the reflection of a multi-colored wall onto the computer screens would be a significant distraction to the person working. In order to reduce this distraction, wooden frames are being covered with black fabric, and the frames are then mounted on the walls. This part of the finishing work is currently stalled, because more fabric needs to be purchased.

One of the more important things we have been doing is building our Thai and Karen vocabularies. We have been taking Thai lessons from Kroo Oiy. She lives nearby and comes twice a week to our home to teach us conversational Thai. Also, the Education Opportunity Program (EOP) staff and students sometimes help us with Karen and Thai words, too. It is exciting to understand some of the languages we hear every day.

Daniel noticed during the first video shoots that it was difficult to estimate when to switch
the view from one camera to the next, because he did not know the Thai language that the presenter was speaking. Also, Tesha needs to know Thai for shopping, and somewhat for communicating with the EOP students.

Many of the students are from the Karen tribe. They learn Thai in school, and speak it here somewhat. But, they are encouraged to speak Karen, their native language, while here at the dorm, so that they do not lose proficiency in that language. They have a Karen language class here at the EOP office on the weekends. One of the goals, that the EOP has for the students, is for them to become missionaries to their own people. If they forget their own language, and only learn basic Thai in school, they can be “stuck” in the middle of two cultures. However, if they become proficient in both languages, and are converted to Christ, then they can become missionary translators. Translators are so very needed, and we hope some of the students will catch that vision. So then, we will need to learn Karen soon also, to encourage the students proficiency in that language.

Tesha has begun to train for the position of girl’s dean. Currently, her job description would be more accurately described as assistant girl’s dean, part-time music teacher, and mom. Since deaning is mothering too, Mommy Bair is the nickname she chose for the students here to call her. Every other week, she wakes up in the morning just before 5am, to make sure the girls are waking up (she rings the bell and turns on the lights if they are not yet waking). The students then need supervision for their chores. Some of the girls cook breakfast, and some clean the bathrooms, and others clean the office. Then the bell is rung to call them to worship. The students sing a few songs they know in Thai, Karen, or English. Then Tesha directs the students to read from the book Desire Of Ages, which they have in Thai. This way there is no translator needed for the worship thought. Then the students have breakfast, and Tesha supervises clean-up after breakfast - so stray grains of the rice they have enjoyed do not end up stuck onto the floor.

When the students come
back from school, sometimes they have a few minutes to learn guitar or violin before going to do their chores in the garden or dorm. They are eager to learn music, and Tesha has been enjoying teaching them to play these instruments and sing some songs in English. Almost every weekend, the students have been learning new songs, one song in Karen (taught by the Karen staff), and one song in English (taught by Tesha). So far, that is the only scheduled music class, but weekdays often have a few minutes here or there for impromptu instrument lessons.

We have also had the fun privilege of joining the outreach to the mountain villages. We have been able to visit some of the small Seventh-Day Adventist companies or churches in the Karen and Aka villages nearby. Three of the Karen EOP staff have taken responsibility for a couple of these churches in the mountains, going there each week to lead Sabbath services. When possible, the students also go with them. Daniel is one of the few staff who is able to drive the trucks here, so he has taken EOP students on several trips to these villages. Tesha, (with Na-na and Sa-no, our two toddlers), has also been able to come on a few of these trips. The children love these “church in the wildwood” settings, and have made friends in the villages. The EOP students are encouraged to visit other people in the village, to make friends and reach out to the Buddhist neighbors. Even our two and a half year old Na-na has been able to join them in that activity - playing with children her age in the villages.

Of course the most important thing to build is relationships. Winning souls for Christ can only be done by building friendships, because it is showing the love of Christ that makes the words of the gospel effective. There are so few people here who even know a little bit about Jesus, and the task of spreading the gospel here is overwhelmingly large. Please keep us in your prayers as we seek to reflect Christ’s love more fully and share the good news of His soon return.
We would like to invite, those that are able, to donate funds to keep these projects going. We, the Bairs, subsist on donations at this time, and we would be greatly encouraged if ten or more people would be able to commit to monthly contributions, as currently the donations to our part of the project have been variable. The EOP Foundation also needs financial donations for students and staff. We dream of clearing the debt on the All-Asia TV Studio, and the studio also needs funds for operation (i.e. to buy blank DVD’s for distribution of TV programs produced). Currently, the studio has no operating budget available, so this is a great need. For the dorm, Tesha wishes for books. Suzuki materials and other music books are needed for teaching violin. Books by Eric B. Hare (who was a missionary to long-ago Burma), like Jungle Stories, Dr. Rabbit, Clever Queen, and Curse Proof would be greatly appreciated, as the EOP staff say they and the students don't know these stories from their own Karen history. If you are able to donate any of these books, and could send them here, we would appreciate it!

Thank-you for reading our newsletter! We hope to send stories once a month in the future. God's blessings to you all!

Daniel, Tesha, Na-na, and Sa-no