

Link Letter No.45 November 2015

Dear friends,

Well, the weather is wet and soggy and the beauty of autumn has certainly finished, and no matter how hard we try to put it off, Christmas will be here before we know it! So far, home leave has gone well and we would like to say thank you to all those who have had us over and welcomed us into your homes over the past few months. Meeting up with you all again has been wonderful and we have thoroughly enjoyed visiting!

Halloween light cake

Ruby attends St James Primary School, Kettleshulme, and recently the headmaster, Mr Paul Quirk, invited all the Year 5 students to design a Halloween Cake for the Tytherington High School Bake-Off competition. Ruby was really keen to enter, but I was initially a bit hesitant as I had always understood Halloween to celebrate evil, which I obviously did not want to do.



Ruby with her prize-winning cake!



Jason and Tracy Day CMS mission partners Thailand

Jason and Tracy Day were CMS mission partners in Nepal for eight years, but since 2012 have been based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Jason currently works with a partner organisation in providing personnel support for people serving across South East Asia. Tracy is working in a variety of volunteer roles as well as prioritising care for the family.

My (Tracy's) mum, however, did some research on it and told Ruby and I what Halloween is really about. Originally it was known as All Hallows Eve. "Hallows" means holy and it was, and still is, the night before All Saints Day; a day in which martyrs and believers who have died are remembered. It was also a day in which death was poked fun at and was therefore not a celebration of evil at all!

The three of us talked about it and shared some ideas and Ruby then designed a three-tier tray bake chocolate cake, covered with hundreds and thousands and decorated with candles and sparklers on the top. The bottom layer was a Malteser and biscuit tray bake, the middle layer a chocolate flapjack and the top was a chocolate Rice Krispie cake. She then had the idea of white lettering to say “All Hallows Eve”, “Light” and “Life”, with a cross at the top.



The situation in Nepal: this is not a jam but a petrol queue!

All of the cake was symbolic. The darkness of it was to represent the evil and darkness in the world. The hundreds and thousands were to represent the colour and joy of life with God. The candles and cross were to represent Jesus as the light of the world and the victor over death; the sparklers were to represent the lives of those Christians who had died.

Ruby entered her design and was chosen along with three other girls from her class to go to the Bake-Off and represent the school. Mr Quirk took them to the High School and they all spent the morning baking and creating together. Other children from another school were also present making their cakes. The judges came around and Ruby won best baker!

For us as a family, the cake competition was the first time we have ever really thought about the real meaning of Halloween, but now that I understand it I hope we can continue to celebrate it in the right way, for what it is – to recognise God’s triumph over evil and to remember the lives of those amazing Christians and martyrs who have gone before us. *“The LORD has done great things for us and we are filled with joy” Psalm 126:3*

Change of plan...

We would like to let you know that we are delaying our return to Chiang Mai slightly, meaning that we will return in July 2016 instead at the end of February. This is for a number of reasons, some of which are below:

1. Training

When we return to Thailand, I (Jason) will be taking on a larger job, with more managerial responsibilities than I currently do. My title will be area personnel manager, based in Chiang Mai but looking after mission partners who work across Asia. I am very aware that I have no formal

qualifications in the HR/personnel Field (my experience has all been on-the-job). I am also not getting any younger so opportunities to study for a recognised qualification are diminishing, especially being overseas which often limits access to quality training. When I look at current HR jobs in the UK, thinking long term, many of them require recognised HR qualifications so I plan to do an intensive training course from December through to July to prepare me for my new role and the future.

2. Schooling

Delaying our return until July would allow Ruby and Libby to benefit from a full academic year in the UK schooling system. This has academic benefits but also enables them to have a better understanding of how UK schools work and function (up to now Ruby has only ever had five months in a UK school and Libby none). It also means they would not have to leave the UK school and re-enter Chiang Mai International School (CMIS) part way through an academic year.

Tracy and I have sat down and had a good talk about schooling and the future. If we go back to Thailand in July 2016 and then do another three-year contract this will take us to June 2019. At that time, Ruby will have finished Year 8 in UK terms (Grade 7 US) and Libby will have finished Year 6, UK terms (Grade 5 US). We are wondering whether we will return to the UK permanently at this point, since it would mean that Ruby would start UK secondary school in Year 9 and therefore be able to choose her options for years 10 and 11 and Libby will just be starting secondary school in Year 7. This would give both Ruby and Libby three years of continuous UK schooling, which we have heard is going to be an upcoming requirement for admittance to a UK university. We have also been able to visit two of the local secondary schools, during the last month during their open days, to get a sense of which may be best for the girls for the future if we did return in 2019.

Finishing in Thailand in 2019 is not set in stone. But, from an academic perspective it does seem to be a good time for the girls. In this respect, we are happy to review the decision in 2018. Ruby and Libby are very happy at CMIS, so we are not too sure what their thoughts will be in 2019 regarding returning or staying and therefore we will look at it again then.

3. Nursing registration for Tracy

One other issue that has cropped up is Tracy's nursing registration and the requirements for her to retain her nursing qualification and license to practice. The UK Nursing Council has changed the three-yearly revalidation requirement and it has become a lot tighter. Staying in the UK a bit longer may help her to get a part time nursing job in the NHS and get some hours in to help with this.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. We just wanted to let you know where things are at the moment.

Nepal update

A friend of ours has gone to Nepal recently to work again as a doctor at Tansen Hospital. He sent this report from Kathmandu:

“Because of demonstrations by certain groups on the Indian border, the Indian authorities have not allowed lorries carrying fuel and other essential supplies to enter Nepal for six weeks now. Our taxi driver had to pay four times the usual rate on the black market, but only charged us three times the usual rate for taking us to our guest house. His house was destroyed in the earthquakes, and he goes home after work to live in one of the tent cities. There are long lines of cars and motorbikes parked near fuel stations waiting for them to open. However, one good thing has been that there is electricity about 90 per cent of the time”. Other friends have also written to say that Nepal is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis as food and fuel have all but run out. People cannot get to hospitals and markets and prices have escalated. Many have resorted to cutting trees down in order to make fires to cook on. Unbelievably, as the Nepali people are suffering so much, there is hardly a mention of it on the news.

Urgent prayer request

Please do pray for the people of Nepal, especially the vulnerable – the poor, the sick, disabled people, children etc – as they struggle to cope with both the aftermath of the earthquake and now the blockades. It is a tormented time for them indeed.

In closing...

Thank you again, for all your love, care and support. May we just wish you all a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year!

With love,

Jason, Tracy, Ruby and Libby

PS. Did you know that you can now receive link letters by email, sent as a PDF? If you would like to receive them this way and help CMS save money, please send an email to links@cms-uk.org

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