

God is at Work



In the midst of the hustle and bustle leading up to Christmas and all the preparations this entails it is pretty easy to lose sight of what it is really all about.

Children are writing letters to Santa and adults are dreaming of BBQs, sunshine and a few quiet moments to relax. It's hard to connect the dots between that picture and the birth of Jesus more than 2000 years ago. But we mustn't lose sight of it. This was the moment that God came to be with us... and it changed everything.

During his life Jesus came to bring good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight to the blind, and to set the oppressed free. And because of his life, death and resurrection, 2000 years later he continues to bring freedom and life in all its fullness to all who believe in him. His ministry continues through faithful people who chose to live their lives for him. People like our partners. Stories of all Jesus is doing in their midst amongst the poorest of the poor roll off their tongues and the excitement, the awe and the joy is sometimes palpable.

But it is not glamorous work and it doesn't often bring accolades or earthly rewards. It is not easy for our partners to choose to live sacrificially, or to remain faithful amidst loss, persecution and disappointment. But because of that baby 2000 years ago Jesus does not simply represent some ancient teaching that they strive to follow, he is present with them and at work through them in their communities... just as he is with you.

You who have chosen to give what you could have kept for yourself. You who have not only noticed the hopelessness, the poverty and the suffering of others, but who have chosen to be part of doing something about it. Your sacrifice doesn't often bring accolades or earthly rewards either, but let me offer my heartfelt thanks and my encouragement for you to continue in your generosity. Your partnership with Bright Hope World is helping resource some incredible work and allows our partners to reach more people and have a greater impact.

I have recently returned from S.E. Asia where I have seen the faces and heard the stories from our amazing partners, and met some of those whose lives have been utterly transformed as they encountered Jesus. To me, this is what it is all about. God is at work. God is with us. This is the real meaning of Christmas.

Emma Stokes
Southeast Asia Partnership Facilitator

Bright Hope News

We recently undertook our Southland Summit in Invercargill – many thanks to Rosedale Bible Chapel for hosting us!

Over the next year or so we are planning to do these local summits all round New Zealand. If you would like to be involved or if your church might be prepared to host us, please do let us know.

These are great opportunities to hear about the work God is doing through our amazing partners around the world, so we look forward to seeing you in your hometown soon!

Another type of summit we do is our Team Gathering in January in Nelson. This is pretty much our only opportunity each year to bring our whole team together and share stories and discuss issues of relevance to the team and our partners.

We all look forward to this event and to just hanging out and spending time together. Please pray for us – it's never quite enough time!

Finally, when we held our Nelson Summit earlier in the year, a group of lovely ladies that pray for us regularly asked for weekly prayer requests, so we started posting these on our Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/brighthopeworld>. Please do pray for us and our partners – we need it!

Life Change Story – Rahab Ministries, Thailand



At the age of 15, M started working in a factory but after four years ended up working at a karaoke bar where the business was actually set up for prostitution. She worked there for three years but then when she heard about Patpong (a street in Bangkok known for prostitution) from a friend, she found a job at one of the bars there. She had been working there for a year when she met people from Rahab Ministries during one of their weekly outreaches. At that stage she was in a place where she felt there was no hope and no future. The only happiness she could find was in having some temporary fun but deep inside she always felt an emptiness.

Even though she had met the Rahab team, for a while she thought that they were people trying to introduce a foreign religion so as a Buddhist she was not interested to know more about it. However, as she learnt more about the Rahab community and what Rahab was about, she finally decided to leave the bar and join Rahab Ministries. The first few months were very challenging, not just the work aspect but also because she had to make a lot of personal adjustments with the system and the people she was working with. With a lot of patience and hard work she slowly got better at everything. In the process she also decided to become a Christian and started learning more about God and prayer which has made a huge impact in her life.

Read more about Rahab Ministries (THA03) at:
<http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=27>

Bright Hope World Office Christmas Closure Dates

The Bright Hope World office will be closed from Friday 23rd December and will resume normal opening hours on Monday 16th January. There will however be someone at the office part-time on 4th, 5th and 11th-13th January.

The last La Mai coffee orders for 2016 need to be in by lunchtime on Monday 19th December in order for them to be sent before Christmas. A coffee roast will next be done on 4th January for any orders received over the Christmas/New Year period and then normal coffee ordering will resume on the 16th January, 2017.

Any standing orders that are due during this time period will either be sent out prior to Christmas or on 5th January.

The team at Bright Hope World greatly appreciate your support as we have sought to give hope to the poorest of the poor throughout 2016. We wish you a very happy Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Prayer and Praise

1. Pray for M and the other ladies being helped out of a life of prostitution by Rahab Ministries.
2. Sarah, a partner in Zambia (ZAM30), had surgery last week for cysts on her right ovary which are possibly cancerous and would appreciate prayer.
3. Praise for Kevin and Helen Honore's safe return from their travels and for the beneficial time they had with many current partners and potential new partners.
4. Pray for all our partners over the upcoming Christmas period which often can add a lot of extra stress and pressure to already difficult situations.