



Emily Chalke

c/o BMS World Mission, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XA
E-mail: chalkee@bmsworldmission.org
www.bmsworldmission.org/echalke

Prayer Letter September 2009

I was just sitting here in my office at NightLight finishing this letter when there was a knock on the door from Neng*. She is a Thai woman who has been in and out of NightLight for three years now. She even lived with me for three months when I first arrived in Bangkok. Her story has been a tragic one and she struggles more than most, and yet she is also one of the most lovable people you could ever meet. She is small, childlike and beautiful and laughs with a huge laugh.

A couple of Monday mornings back she turned up at my apartment drunk at 7.00am. I let her in and she passed out on the sofa. Then, on Tuesday night when we were out in the red-light district we saw her, and she said she was going to go sleep in a park. Instead, we got her to go and stay with some friends who have a shelter; she is living there and enjoying it and doing well so far. And now today she came into NightLight asking for her job back!

African ladies returned – hooray!

In June we were able to help repatriate a couple of African women who had been trafficked to Bangkok for the sex industry. The first night I met one of these women she began to cry as I spoke with her. She had arrived from her home country only a few days before and was feeling scared and ashamed standing on the Bangkok street. Gently, I inquired why she was doing this if she hated it so much and she replied it was because she owed the person who



had brought her to Bangkok \$5,000. I explained that having been tricked into this work she didn't owe anybody anything. She wasn't convinced and it took several more days for her courage to build before she felt ready to escape. When that day came she was determined to leave the street that she called 'hell' behind.

She came first and then the other woman, who had also been trafficked by the same person, followed a day later. They stayed with us for about ten days. In that time they were taught how to make jewellery and together we processed a little of what had happened to them. During that time we were able to make several connections with work happening in Uganda. One connection has been particularly useful. We've been in contact with a Ugandan woman, Anne*, who works for a Ugandan-run organisation, and have been so impressed by her integrity and genuine love for these women upon their return.

It was Anne that collected the women on return to their country and who we arranged to have a small business loan administered through. Last week, Anne sent pictures of the women and information on what they have been able to use the small amount of money for. One has bought hardware items to sell at a little shop front. This is what she was doing before she was trafficked but sold everything before coming to Bangkok. The other girl is going to use the money to go to beauty school.



In amongst the ups and down of working and seeing so many women trapped in prostitution, this has been another really encouraging story of restoration. Please keep praying for these women.

Rescue and arrest

A few weeks ago now, I received a phone call from Sarah*, a young woman in trouble. Sarah had been prostituting here having been trafficked by another person from her country.

The day Sarah called for help, we got her moved into a safe place immediately and since then it has been an intense/scary/exciting/tedious at times/dramatic/long/ roller-coaster of meetings and processes in order to help her effectively.

However, in an eventful twist to this case, almost by accident, we ended up in a meeting with the anti-trafficking police, who we had not met before because we usually go through other channels. This began a chain reaction of events which culminated in the arrest of the trafficker within just a couple of days. It felt wonderful to think there might be justice and we were impressed at the speed of the police's work. However, since that promising start with the arrest we are now held up in bureaucracy and the victim continues to wait to go home.

Moreover, it is very scary for Sarah and the danger to her and her family remains real. Sarah has mentioned several times that if you have money in her country you can do whatever you want. Apparently, her trafficker does have connections and she is genuinely afraid that those will be used against her in retribution.

Please pray for Sarah and her real fears that we are doing our best to help alleviate. Please pray for safety for her family. She says she doesn't care for her own safety – only that of her family. Please also pray for patience during the time she remains here.

During this waiting time she is living with good people who are showing her love and community. She has even been asking many questions and at night when she cannot sleep she has been reading the Bible (one in her own language). The other night she was reading the gospel of Luke and was so enthralled by it she said she couldn't put it down – not even to go the bathroom! She is deeply interested in Jesus and is eager to talk about what she's

read about him; yesterday just one of the stories she discussed with me was the woman who anointed Jesus feet (Luke 7). Hopefully, it will not be long before she commits to following Jesus and trusting him more fully.

NightLight's new website:

NightLight has a new website! We're hoping this will continue to bring in more jewellery sales as well as keeping people up-to-date with work here:

www.nightlightinternational.com

Currently, NightLight is employing 86 Thai women who now have life and dignity in a great, fun job!

Thank you for reading my news and for praying for me and the work here. As you can see we are having increased opportunity to help women trafficked into Bangkok – praise God for that, it is his heart for these women to know freedom. Yet, this does not come without risk so **please pray** for continued safety and wisdom as we outreach into the red-light district.

*Names marked with * have been changed.*

Emily

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