

# I HAVE A DREAM

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“I have a dream,” she said. And while she’s no Martin Luther King, her dream does have the potential to have an equally revolutionary impact.

Our dreamer is not a charismatic preacher. Nor a political juggernaut. Our dreamer is just a humble, disabled and unassuming woman from a small village in northern Thailand. We’ll call her Inh. One night, Inh dreamed that Jesus called her mobile phone. How did she know it was Jesus if she’d never heard of him before? The name Pra Yesu (Jesus) showed on caller ID, of course. She felt overwhelmed, too flustered to answer and unsure how to respond to him. The call went through to message bank.

A month later, in another dream, Inh met a holy man. He lifted her in his arms and prayed for her. She woke from that dream with a wonderful sense of wellbeing and peace. It was days later that Inh saw a picture of Jesus in a children’s book. “That’s him – he’s the one who lifted me!” she exclaimed.

At about the same time God was infiltrating the dreams of some other villagers – the crew from *Inception* has got nothing on our God.

Dreamer number two, Nok, had a terrible fall out of a tamarind tree. The doctors suspected broken ribs and internal bleeding, but the test results came back all clear. It was then that Nok remembered that he had met Jesus in a dream. While his family and friends were sure that his accident was caused

by the spirits, Nok was convinced that Jesus had protected him.

So Inh and Nok and a few others who were coming to know Jesus, started hanging out with some Global Interaction cross-cultural workers who lived in the area.

“It was exciting times,” says Global Interaction team member, Muana, “to see God draw all these people together.”

**Jan, another team member, adds: “While these guys were dreaming about Jesus, we were dreaming of seeing a church that’s culturally appropriate emerge in Thailand. Here we were, right at the birth of it!”**

A culturally appropriate church? What in Ronald McDonald’s name does that mean?

“We didn’t want to impose a Western model of church – with Sunday gatherings, big stages and lengthy messages. It just wouldn’t work for the Thai people. We wanted to empower this Thai community to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus,” says Jan.

The Thai people see Christianity as a Western religion. So it comes as little surprise to learn that even after more than 160 years of mission in Thailand, less than one per cent of the population is Christian. “People think they would betray their own culture and family if they became Christians. We wanted to help people figure out how they can still be a part of their society and family, and also come into a new family: the family of Jesus.”

So Inh, Nok and the others met regularly and gave it a go. The fellowship group gathered each week in Muana’s home: sharing a meal, reading the Word and praying.

It wasn’t long before Muana was encouraging these new believers to take on leadership roles. Inh started doing the Bible readings and quickly progressed to helping teach the weekly lessons.

“We just want to be facilitators,” Muana explains. “We want them to figure out for themselves how they worship.”

Inh may not have a Doctorate of Theology or know the key to preaching a killer three-point sermon, but she does have a real relationship with Jesus that connects with the local mindset and culture in a way that defies argument.

One week Jan was helping Inh prepare a lesson about the miraculous catch of fish. Inh noted that it was similar to a soap opera on Thai TV. Inh used this illustration to intro the lesson, and because it was a story that everyone knew, it grabbed their attention immediately.

Pretty soon the fellowship group had outgrown Muana’s home. It wasn’t that his couch wasn’t comfy or he couldn’t bake a half-decent teacake. No – they wanted to hold this movement. So the group now meets in the home of one of the local believers.

Sound a bit like Peter, Paul and the early church?

And like those of the early church, this fellowship group has realised that being the body of Christ is more than just weekly gatherings for a cup of International Roast and a spiritual pick-me-up.

**For them, their experience of Jesus has been life-changing. No longer are they bound by a fear of the spirits that is so predominant in the Thai culture. They now know the freedom brought by Jesus. Wouldn’t they want their parents, their children, their aunts and uncles, their neighbours to know this freedom too? They can’t help but share it!**

Inh takes every opportunity to share her faith and pray with those in need. “She communicates in ways that truly touch them and in a way we can only dream of,” says Jan.

One of the believers, Lamud, who regularly travels from a neighbouring village to attend the fellowship group, is keen to share his faith too. One day Muana briefly mentioned that some time in the future they could start a new house church in his village. Turns out they had different understandings of “future”. The very next Sunday Muana gets a call from Lamud: “Where are you? We’re all here, we’ve got snacks and we’re ready to go. We’re just waiting for you to come and teach.”

When Muana arrived, there was a small group of people all interested to hear more about this Jesus guy that Lamud told them about.

...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.<sup>1</sup>

**Inh, Nok, Lamud and the others may not rival the great Martin Luther King’s magnetic personality or be preaching to the masses about dramatic social change... yet. But what we are witnessing is the birth of a movement: a movement that will see the transformation of a few people, a village, and hopefully soon, a country.**

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:47