

Ethnic Thai of Thailand

The People Group

The Ethnic Thai people are hospitable, friendly and generally cheerful. They are also polite and respectful, avoiding conflict where possible. They are highly loyal to their nation, religion and monarchy. **Their identity is built on being Thai and Buddhist, which means it is difficult for them to see how they can follow Jesus in culturally relevant ways.** While Christianity is growing among Thailand's minority people, it is yet to significantly impact the ethnically Thai.

The Ministry

God is at work among the Ethnic Thai and He is drawing people to Himself. Over the past years, the team has built relationships within their community and walked with people as they have chosen to follow Him. **Praise God that numerous faith communities are now regularly meeting and local leaders are being equipped to teach and lead.**

As the team journey with the Ethnic Thai faith communities, they are witnessing the believers discerning what being a follower of Jesus looks like in their context. **The faith communities are questioning which elements of their culture can be adopted as part of their expression of faith, and which other elements should be modified or rejected in order to remain true to the Gospel.**

During COVID, Thailand has gone in and out of lockdown. **This has made it challenging for the team to fully engage with the community, however, God has opened doors for them to reach out and share His love.** The faith communities have been able to meet in person or online, though not all the believers have been able to join the online gatherings due to limited access to technology.

Team Members

Carolyn and Dema
Glenn and Liz
Luke and Belle
Muana (Team Leader) and Villy
Petina
Margaret (candidate)

Prayer Needs

- » Pray that the Ethnic Thai faith community leaders will be equipped more and more to lead their own people
- » **For the faith communities to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading as they discern their identity within the wider community**
- » For God to prepare the hearts of the Ethnic Thai people the team connects with
- » That God's Spirit will open opportunities for intercultural workers to have meaningful conversations and share the message of Jesus
- » **For Ethnic Thai believers to remain deeply connected to their communities, sharing about their faith in Jesus as opportunities arise**
- » That God will continue leading the team towards opportunities to engage meaningfully with their community throughout COVID
- » For God to raise up more intercultural workers to join the team

Stories of Hope from Thailand

God Encounters

Muana and Villy share a story of God breaking through, “Recently while on the train heading to meet with some of the Ethnic Thai faith community leaders, Villy received a message from a woman she did not recognise. As they chatted Villy was curiously trying to figure out who she was, as the woman seemed to know her well.

Later on Villy figured out who the woman was - U, a chef in a small Thai restaurant that we used to frequent during pre-COVID days. **A few days later she came to visit us. She shared about losing her job and struggling to make ends meet due to the impact of COVID on the economy.**

She had no one to turn to and remembered Li (Villy). “Li, where are you?” She looked for Villy on her phone and found her. Villy could not help her with her plans to invest in restarting the restaurant, however, she helped her with a plan to start a home delivery meal service with Villy and Muana being her first customers! She was then able to deliver meals three times a week to the different Bible study groups.

Villy explained to U that it was no coincidence she thought of her and shared the hope we have in Jesus. After they prayed with her, she asked, “What must I do to follow Jesus”? Villy and Muana encouraged her talk to Jesus and share her difficulties and struggles with Him, and also invited her to join a weekly Bible study group with them.”

More Stories from Thailand

- » **Episode 9 of Missioning** with Liz: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

Their Own Distinctive Ways

Dema and Carolyn share an example of how the Ethnic Thai believers follow Jesus in their own distinctive ways.

“Ethnic Thai people often worship guardian spirits for protection over their house and land. They also have rituals to ask for rain. Rice is a staple food here and many people depend on rice crops for their livelihood, including members of the faith communities. **While their neighbours ask guardian spirits for rain to help their rice crop thrive, the local believers pray to Jesus for good rain and a plentiful harvest.**

Before the rainy season starts, the believers come together to seek God’s blessing for the land. They bring tangible elements of seeds, tools, soil and water, scattering them and praying to the true provider of rain. **Through this, they are expressing their faith and trust in Jesus in a culturally meaningful way.”**