

MALAYSIA was a great country for the 4-month training in the summer of 2005 (May-August). We were the 4th class of the Global Partners Training Center (GPTC4), counting from when they moved the center to Malaysia a few years ago. There are various ethnic groups who live peacefully together, and English is a publicly spoken language. The food was also great, and it took us about 2 weeks to get used to the weather-- that only means we sweat less than we used to because we walked much more slowly. We liked hanging out at Ikano mall, with its music store for Timothy's 1-hr drum sessions and a great pet store. KLCC was cool too, as well as sitting in the very front "no-sitting" part of the LRT. A lot of the Christians we got to know were of Chinese descent or non-Malays. They are actually perfectly suited for cross-cultural missions; we saw how they lived in a multi-cultural setting from birth, and knew how to deal with Muslims or other cultures. We learned a lot more than we expected during this 4-month training. We are thankful for the positive challenges God provided through this training in Malaysia. Except for the law that forbids evangelism to the Malays, it seems to be a great place to live!

We went on three field trips during our training, which were as refreshing as they were challenging. We went to Sabah (in East Malaysia) in early June for a week, where we spent time with Bible translators, including about 20 lay leaders from churches near the remote village (Tungku). The thousands of mosquitoes did not prove to be fatal as some feared-- no malaria or dengue fever. Instead, we were blessed to see the villagers who were so thankful and content in their \$2000 houses, and also to ponder on how the missionary and his family lived there for all these years....

Our 2nd field trip was in early July where we split up into three teams. My team "researched" three cities in the eastern coast of the main Malaysian peninsula, Kota Bahru, Kuala Terengganu and Kuantan. You can actually get some good info on these cities on the Internet; but get to know the locals for cheaper prices in everything. We met some interesting people, and even a guy (Taekwondo master) who showed us around and treated us to dinner. That's what hospitality used to be like for our ancestors!

Our 3rd trip to Vietnam and Cambodia was especially eye opening. We saw the Vietnamese church in a similar political situation as in China, where one has to choose between the official church and the underground church. I don't want to stumble anyone by describing my pho experience. Seriously, visiting the Vietnam War tunnels near Hochiminh City (formerly Saigon) and the exhibits were especially sobering. Cambodia was even more outrageous, in terms of visible need. Just read the book, "Stilled Lives" that describes various episodes of individual families in the Killing Fields. Even their food was a little hard to swallow! But we learned that

their culture was very similar to that of Thailand.

Our training schedule was intense, and we didn't get much free time for our family; but we had to adjust to being with the children for most of our training responsibilities at the same time. We started each weekday morning listening to lectures (or actively participating, depending on the visiting missionary), and every afternoon with one or two activities or discussion and presentations. Each unit or family also had an assigned local church for Sunday worship and a cell group during the week, in addition to our own corporate worship on Tuesday evenings. There were also plenty of writing assignments, to document almost everything we experienced here. We also had book reports due every two weeks. Many of us had difficulty maintaining this schedule without getting sick every few weeks. Our final project was a research term paper that was designed to help us with our actual mission field in the future. Visiting missionaries told us that life would be more hectic once we enter our respective mission fields. Their candid testimonies were especially helpful.

USA was a good place to return to in September after our 4-month training, except we no longer had a home (or a car or a cell phone). But our support-raising trip to the east coast was successful, and we had a flurry of last minute appointments in Los Angeles the final few weeks before we departed on 10/25/05. It was good to see friends and make new ones in Chicago and DC. We also drove up to Owls Head, ME, stopping by New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. We missed friends in Texas and Arizona, but did get to drive up to San Jose and Monterey Bay for Sarah's sister and old friends. We also spend a few Sundays with our home church, Torrance Good Shepherd Church in October.

KOREA was our next destination and we spent 4 weeks trying to wrap up our final support-raising phase of preparation; but we had difficulty in establishing a relationship with more than one church that would support us financially. We made some good friends in Seoul, and Paul's grandfather in Mogpo, a retired minister, introduced us to some of his old disciples. It was also good to have some time for relatives we hadn't seen in years or decades. We're particularly thankful that our children got a positive impression of Korea, and hope to visit again, except for the place we stayed in-- Timothy said it best when we first entered, "I want to go home." God always provides.

THAILAND is hot. We arrived in Bangkok on 11/24/05, and the GP Thai missionaries came out as a group to welcome us-- a very nice tradition. We met again for the annual GP Christmas party a week later. Paul's father got us working right away in finding an apartment and

registering for language school. We also enrolled our children in a Thai Christian school nearby. We were comforted by having our friends Milo and Natalie separately confirm some of the recommendations Paul's dad had made regarding school and a Thai church to attend. We're currently attending Mahapawn Church and Newsong Church.

We're relieved to finally be here; it seems that just being here is a big deal. We didn't realize until our trip to Korea what a big deal it could be that Paul as a MK is going back to the mission field. There was a lot of excitement and publicity that we weren't prepared for; but we tried to be cool. We hope to do what we can and what God prompts for the church of Thailand. Please pray that we will work out our adjustment here through the impending culture shock that's supposed to last between 6 months to 2 years. That's when the initial excitement of "being here" wears out and homesickness takes us to the point of (or beyond) depression. But you'll pray for us, right?