

Greetings Friends!

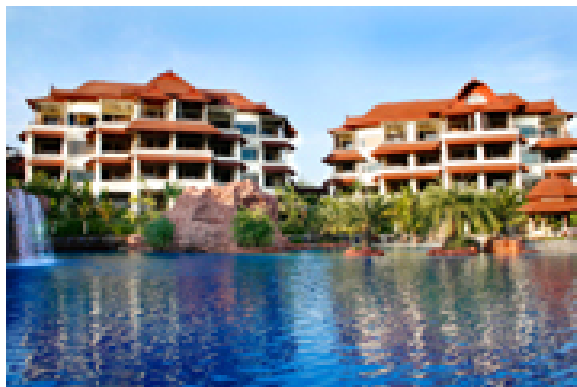
November 2008

We hope that you are well and enjoying preparations for the Christmas season! Things have been busy with us for the last few weeks – and without even a hint of Christmas approaching. We have visitors coming from Canada, Ray is traveling a lot and we are preparing to come home for Christmas!.

At the end of October and the beginning of November we spent 5 days in Bangkok and 6 days at a resort in Thailand for a conference. Bangkok was as it always is – full of shopping malls and street food. We spent much of our time there doing touristy things with Ray's mom who was visiting us. One highlight of our time in Bangkok was a visit to an organization called Nightlight that gives girls an alternative income in order to leave prostitution. It's actually mentioned in the book 'Not for Sale'. Visiting Nightlight actually inspired me... I know that most of you are starting to think about Christmas shopping. Would you be interested in buying unique gifts that are giving people a second chance at life? There are so many organizations here in Cambodia (and in Thailand too) that are developing livelihood programs for women coming out of slavery, trafficked women, or former prostitutes. Usually the big limitation on their organizations is selling the goods. They have more than enough girls who are interested but they need to have the money in hand to pay their wages on day 1. For example, Nightlight makes beautiful, high-quality jewelry but they still aren't selling enough to actually pay all of the girls' wages because they don't have a reliable distribution chain.

I was thinking, after visiting NightLight, that I could help you Christmas shop and at the same time we could all help to support organizations that work here trying to give women an alternative to prostitution and poverty. I've attached a Catalogue of the items made by partners of Chab Dai here in Cambodia as well as information about how you can order Nightlight jewelry (they have an online store). I am coming back to Canada on December 16th and between Ray and I we have some extra baggage allowance that should allow us to bring orders back with us. You would just have to arrange to meet up with me sometime before Christmas to pick up the items that you order.

After Bangkok we (Ray, Ray's mom and I) went to a retreat with Samaritan's Purse staff from all over Asia. We did two days of learning about how to participate in a DART (Disaster Assistance Relief Team) and then 4 days of ministry retreat. Samaritan's Purse brought in great speakers and a worship band from the Philippines. It was a really great time to connect with people and also for relaxation at a beautiful resort.



Before heading to Bangkok at the end of October Ray and I were in Cambodia traveling a little bit around the country, but not outside. We started our language classes again – this time with a private tutor who comes to our house twice a week. During this time I also participated in a workshop called Hands that Heal. It is primarily for training caregivers of trafficking survivors, but the first day of the training was a seminar about

basic background and information about trafficking and how to be better informed. We discussed what steps one should do to start a shelter for trafficked girls, etc. Much of the workshop was not new to me – but I think that it just solidified my understanding and now, if needed, I can do similar workshops as it was a trainer of trainers training.



Ray is always busy with the many water filter projects in Asia. He spends usually one day per week with Hagar (the largest implementer of water filters in Cambodia and around the world). At the beginning of October he found out that the inventor of the BioSand Water Filter was coming to Cambodia – for the first time. This happened to be the same week as a program officer from CIDA (the Canadian

International Development Agency) was coming to inspect/check in on Hagar's filters. CIDA has supported SP and Hagar with the BioSand Filter in the past. With many weeks like this, life has been busy!

Now I am back in Cambodia until we come home for Christmas in December. Ray is traveling a lot in the next month – to Myanmar and maybe to Nepal. He had planned on being in Vietnam for a couple of weeks but that fell through due to visa problems. My roommate from McMaster University - Anne and her husband Michael are coming to visit for the first 2 weeks of December so that should keep me busy and not too lonely.

Last week was the annual water festival in Phnom Penh. The usual 1 million people of the city expands into 4 million and it's just crazy. It's a celebration to mark the changing of directions in the river - during the wet season the river flows upstream and fills a lake and right around now the dry season arrives and the river reverses its flow. There are boat races for three days and everything in the city shuts down. We mostly avoided the area where the races took place, but one night in the middle of the week we tried to eat a restaurant that was in the neighbourhood of the river. Our tuk-tuk couldn't even get through because there were so many people walking down to see the races. We had to turn back and go to a different restaurant in another location!

I did manage to find a tree that looks a little bit like an evergreen – so it's decorated and officially reminding me that Christmas is coming!

Well, we look forward to seeing you all very soon. Have a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday filled with snow and family fun! Don't take Christmas time in Canada for granted – enjoy it to its fullest!

Love,
Christine and Ray



