

An email from Claire Sullivan (March 2019)

Well Peeps,

Another amazing learning experience. Last Sunday I followed Pat and Sam Sarvis out on my longest motorcycle trip to-date to a seminary out at Udom Sok. We gathered with 5 deaf/mute churches. WOW! Pastor Yoon's church is called "Thomburi Deaf Church about 2 miles away from the apartment I am staying at. We went with great expectancy and **IT WAS PACKED OUT!** For those of us who can hear this would be a very quiet experience. (see photos attached).

As the deaf/mute teacher gave a message and the worship leader led us in Thai-sign language worship I could feel the presence of God. I have met more deaf people that have heard the voice of God and have had dreams and visions from God. They hear in their Spirit - the whispers - the thoughts that we often doubt, but they do not because they know God's voice within.

Then I noticed something that grieved me and angered me. I was very surprised by it. But why would I be surprised? Our Thomburi Deaf Church led by Pastor Yoon was gathered together - many in the back. There were so many of our crew so into the message and signing to people from other deaf churches with excitement and were met with a few snubs until I had someone translate what powerful speakers they are in their own church.. They were so jacked-up about the message and were signing very expressively to each other. They were dressed like they do in comfortable clothing (some miss matched : )) like House of Hope Church! I noticed that many from the other deaf churches had better clothes and were socially inept with one another. There were many couples with children and I was told later that many are educated and employed. Yup - there was a little corporate attire! **Then I saw people signing and giving disrespectful looks at each other about our crew.** I thought, **"Even Here!"** It was a **CLASS** issue. It's pervasive everywhere and I was so sad to find it here among the deaf/mute community. If they only knew that this community was scraped off the streets and from under bridges and old train stations. They had to have DNA testing to prove their existence and to get Government ID Cards to receive a benefit. They have been disciplined, Many preach, teach and serve on outreach. As the church has grown they have been able to assimilate more in hearing culture and some do have part-time jobs and a few full-time.. There is a very small core that has gone to school and at least three have average jobs.

I really had to reflect on this later and thought, "This is why we have to plant ministries and outreach churches like Thomburi - Thank God for the Thomburi Deaf Mute Church because they wouldn't fit or be received in another, along with Rak-teh church in the slums, House of Hope Church in Lynn, Place of Promise in Lowell, the South End Neighborhood Church, Starlight Ministries and many outreach churches we know stateside and globally. God's love and compassionate is so great that He will find and send a person and/or team to a place to begin to reach every person He ever created to hear and understand in their context how deep the Father's Love is. "For God so loved **this world** that He sent His one and only Son and that anyone that will believe in Him will not perish but receive the gift of Eternal Life." **Can CLASS** keep **"those people"** from understanding the love that was demonstrated at the Cross for them and from hearing God's message to us in His the Church? **There is no CLASS at the CROSS.** That's why Jesus came to take it out to those who didn't fit but fit perfectly in Him.

A few weeks I spoke to the Thomburi Deaf Church. I was standing next to Pastor Yoon. She is beginning to slowly transition in a pastoral support role to one of the other deaf churches and pastor Thomburi. I told the crew, "They do not know how much they need you and you do not know how much you need them. The Lord is going to do something so powerful as you all humble yourselves and find out how much you can learn from each other and to have a greater impact together in reaching a broader, wider, deeper group of deaf/mute family in Bangkok! I said, "Your have a double vision and a new mission!"

What a journey of seeing something I did not think I would see. But what a Hope I have in knowing that something more beautiful will grow out of it.

Thank you for your prayers and support. If you received this email (lol) please know you are being prayed for every day!

Love Pastor Claire  
Missionary 4 Life