JUNE 2016 MISSION STORY

Love for the Language
By Sulad Joyce & Hannamel Canilao

Continuing with the learning process of Thai language was sometimes struggling on our part but we keep on looking at the bigger picture. We imagine ourselves speaking fluently in church services and with the Thai people in general. That’s gonna be marvelous! But of course, it’s only an imagination because learning how to write, read and speak in Thai requires more than being imaginative but rather being realistic of having your heart out for the language you are learning. We were required of spending a minimum of four hours a day. Mastering it could sometimes be boring and so switch with possible way to learn. There are also some distractions and other work to do so it’s a test for us how to manage our time wisely.

To vary the learning process from merely reading, writing and speaking Thai, we listen to audio lessons and videos which proved to be helpful while at the same time sticking to the study of five distinct tone marks. When we felt being cooped up studying for quite long hours, going out to talk with the locals is also enjoyable since practical conversation takes place. For these few days of having rain, we missed going out. It’s a great accomplishment if somebody whom we are talking to can understand what we mean. In that way, we can say that our study is becoming useful. We make sure that every day we can read verses from the Thai-English Bible to have a background on Thai religious terms and also Thai songs needed for church services. We got pretty confused when it comes to reading since it requires the addition of tones to every words. We also have tests to evaluate what we learned. It’s also an effective way of learning the language if we make use the newly-acquired words in our daily life.

Staying in Phayao for more than a month and meeting very, very few people who can speak English is already a challenge itself. In short, we really need to learn for more. Phayao represents just a small part of Thailand which has a great need for English language. There a lot of schools in Thailand, we believe, that needs SULADS volunteers especially in the rural areas. And we, volunteers have a great call to learn the language to understand Thai people more. Language is very essential to know the heart of the people, Without this, we can’t fully understand their sentiments, their longings, their desire for truth. It all boils down to learning the language. This reminds of the verse found in 1 Corinthians 14:11 that says, “ Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.” If we don’t know their language, how can be effectively teach them about English and about God?

The more we learn, the more we thirst to learn and the more we think of the great work that awaits us somewhere out there. The work of SULADS Thailand is getting more and more with the coming days. Thailand is such a vast field that needs more volunteers and more funding we believe. We hope to meet more Thai volunteers to know firsthand about their culture and their language, to work hand in hand with them in accomplishing this great work in this country. And we are sure that it doesn’t stop there for more neighboring countries will be of need of more SULADS volunteers. How beautiful that day would be when all SULADS Thailand missionaries will come together and be talking to each other in Thai, instead of English.

Looking at the map of Thailand every now and then, we kept on pointing to possible areas where SULADS presence might be needed. The fields are waiting, lots of work to do, more missionaries are needed. But before doing that let’s fall in love with the language first. Prayer is very essential how to develop love for the language and stay out of boredom. So help us through your prayers.

**WHILE WE’RE WAITING...**

By Sulad Joyce & Hannamel Canilao

We survived a month and a week here in Phayao. There are countless things we had experienced and innumerable blessings to mention that our waiting for our soon mission field becomes motivating for us to appreciate every goodness of God. Days passed by unnoticed because of unexpected happenings worth remembering and learning.

We cherished moments spent with church members during Sabbath day and out-of-town trips. How stress relieving we felt for the unconditional hospitality and cheerfulness we have with them. Though SDA members are quite few in numbers but we realized quantity doesn’t count that much if we labor for the Lord. It’s the heart of every church member to be involved in church activities and gatherings. This group of believers has a long way to go. Before we know it, new believers will soon be part of this humble church family here.

Our unexpected trip to Chiang Mai witnessing the baptism and a visit to Maesa Mai village was really unforgettable. It was nostalgic for us regarding mission school life in the Philippines. Hill tribe people shared a lot of similarities to the indigenous people in Philippines, notable in their traditional attire. It made us realize how great the work of SULADS here in Thailand. We instantly felt the connection we have with them, very heart-warming. Amazing, refreshing and inspiring experience how God moves this people here.

When SULAD Monique Abrahams left for the U.S., it was a privilege to meet our new SULAD, Jessica Fields. We spent some time with Monique listening to her life in SULADS. Indeed, Monique became a totally transformed person in almost a year of being assigned here. On the other hand, Jessica and we were discussing on being new to teaching work which was a bit of a real challenge at first but the rewards afterward is truly fulfilling. We can’t wait when Jessica will end her term. For sure this young lady will have her share of great, transforming stories, too.

We also found great happiness with our Wednesday English Bible Class, especially for the first-ever dinner we have with them. We have “steak-looking adobo” and a certified spicy Thai chicken mixed with herbs. That was a sumptuous meal and great conversation! We prayed for their deep interest with not just studying English but knowing the “main dish” of our Bible class-JESUS.

Our typical life here undergoing language training was not that always perfect but we managed anyway knowing that God has His own perfect time frame. We thank Him for the blessing of meeting friends, conversing with fellow co-missionaries of different nationalities, celebrating special occasions with church members, enjoying the delight of reading books of various interests, seeing missionaries come and go, talking with the locals, cheering for our HEIAGGY’s few steps (only in Thailand)…The list goes on WHILE WE’RE WAITING…Because while we’re waiting, we realized we have so many things to learn yet and it’s God alone who will send the signal when to go. We cling to His promise:
“ But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31.