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## Reports from Trainers in Southeast Asia

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*This report summarizes the experiences of national church trainers working in an undisclosed Southeast Asian nation.*

I haven't particularly edited these because I wanted you to have the opportunity to hear what [the national trainers say about what is happening. Occasionally that does mean that there are somewhat drastic jumps in thoughts or it is a little confused. To help you out, I did add a few notes to make it a little clearer.

### Regional Trainer #1

Most the churches in the central area are tribal. When they become Christians they are automatically excluded from the social programs offered by the government. (Anna's note: In these areas there are large numbers of social programs that are used as an enticement to encourage 'correct thinking and behaviour') The Christians are forced to depend on God to provide them with enough food and clothing. But through this training we came to understand that it isn't enough just to pray for food for ourselves. We shouldn't just be receiving we need to give as well. One of the lessons that taught about how God wants even the poor to give encouraged the poor tribal people very much. They said that before we think that we are poor and can't give anything but are only able to receive from God but now we see from the story of the widow with her last meal (1 Kings 17) that poor people can give to God and give to others. In the lesson about the Good Samaritan we cried because we realize that we are not like that - we don't care for those we don't know.

I am a pastor but I have learnt so much through these lessons and I know that through the rest of the program we will continue to learn so much. The churches I train are all excited by the program. People are so enthusiastic that they come and stay and study till late at night even though we only provide one meal a day. They try to bring some food so that they have enough to eat and can learn more.

Through this training people have opened their minds and been freed from their limitations, they now know how to rely on God not on themselves. They have done several seed projects - repaired a road and gifts of rice for the poor (Anna's Note - they collect a handful of rice each time they cook and put it aside. At the end of the week

they collect all the rice and give to someone needy in the village). In another area the government asked the community to clear the road so there were no mosquitoes. But they didn't. After they have studied they realized that they should do it so they did. The head of the village said that now the Christians are very good but then he said I don't know what they want.

Another area built a 9m deep well. They put the bamboo fence around the well so nothing drops in the well. Before the people drank rain water from the holes. However now we realize that our bodies are temples of God so we drink clean water. After the well was built we were able to have a wedding – now we have enough water to clean for the wedding. Before we never thought or cared about hygiene but now Christians care about hygiene.

In our area the government started a program called 135 in which they will give you enough money to buy all the materials for a stable house if you sign a paper renouncing your faith. Sadly out of the 84 families in our area, one family fell and signed the paper. Please pray for that family. The people in our area are so poor but they are faithful to work together and not give up. The houses are very bad but God helped us to be faithful and resist temptation. We have a song in our area 'Even though our house is broken and we are hungry, we still have Jesus.'

#### **Regional Trainer #2**

In my area I conducted the training with three different denominations. At one training so many people turned up and we only have a limited meal allowance so I told them that if they want to study they will have to bring their food and I will provide rice. If they can't afford anything then they just have to have rice and salt. On the last day of the training the government came and I thought that I would be arrested. In the past I used to work in this area and I was arrested 7 times but it has now been 3 years since I came. The police asked many questions and wanted to know where the program came from but I didn't tell them. I quoted John 3:16 and told them that from this we can understand how much God loves us and because of that we should love our neighbors because if God is willing to die for us then we should be willing to serve one another. The police looked at the materials and continued to ask me where I learnt it. He asked how much longer I have left to teach and I said just one day. So the police said 'because this is a good program you can teach it but next time you should talk to me so that you won't have any trouble. We won't ban you any more because you are bringing good teaching to our area.'

In our area we fixed the road and rebuilt a house for a widow and built a latrine for the community. In the past people had never used a latrine and so they are worried it will be smelly. One woman refuses to use it so I had to teach them to use ash to decrease the smell. At another church they went out and fixed a road and helped in the fields. Their

houses are on stilts so they tie cattle under house – now they know it is not clean so now they clean under the house.

### **Regional Trainer #3**

In the past 2 months I completed 6 trainings with 6 churches. During one training a non Christian come to visit the owner of the house where the training was being conducted. She saw that they are doing training so she decided to attend. She heard that church should love their neighbors and decided to become a Christian. After the training the church started a fund to help other people. There were two people in the church - a tailor and one can make yoghurt and they want to help people. They gather people who want to learn these skills and teach them so that they can do these things.

One area I trained one of the men just became a Christian and when learnt about Luke 2:52 – that we should grow spiritually, physically, socially and mentally he thought about his family – they fear him because he is easily angry. He realized that he has to change and decides to do so. His wife sells lottery tickets on the streets in Ho Chi Minh City. Last Thursday his wife returned and he said that he would change and he will not beat his wife and children so now they could stay home and they didn't need to worry. She is not a Christian but last Sunday came to church and received Christ. I asked the wife do you see any change in your husband – she said that thank god he became a Christian and changed his attitude and doesn't beat me and the children. Since he had become a Christian – he promised he will not be the same person anymore. It is a miracle that God has done. When she was selling lottery tickets she asked someone to buy a ticket but they gave her a tract about Christianity for Vietnamese. When returned she showed her husband and she was not angry when she saw that he had removed all the altars etc.

In another area a women attended the training. The day before the neighbor stole the mother chicken – before she had stolen eggs but never the mother chicken. She wanted to do something to revenge that situation but after the training she realized that she should not take revenge.

In another area 2km from my house, after the training the church decided to rebuild the road leading to the church.

Through this training I see that God has changed the thinking of the church so much and many people have changed their attitude and thinking. Before they only focus on spiritual and now care about both so that is a big change.

Actually there are another 9 testimonies that are all similar. More stories of problems with police, more stories of lives changed more stories of churches reaching out to their communities and more stories of people coming to Christ including one community where over 100 have already been saved and more are being saved every day.

**I pray that if you have read this far that their stories have inspired you as much as they have inspired me.**

**To God be the Glory!**

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