

# Peter & Kelly + Lukas Passchier

## *Both Feet on the Ground*

Newsletter January 2009

Dear Friend,

Greetings and Happy New Year for 2009! We're a bit late for a Christmas letter but thought we'd still make it in time for an update on the second half of



*Tummy showing*

2008. Little did we know when we wrote our newsletter last June that we are actually a family of four and not of three! We found out shortly after sending out our news that we are expecting our second child, who in the meantime is making his presence known by active movement in Kelly's growing tummy and is due to make his appearance in two short months on 4 March. The Thai teachers at our language school have gotten much mileage out of our "made in Thailand" baby and have taken turns placing their hands on Kelly's tummy then proclaiming they think it will be a boy! All without the help of the ultrasound (which we had the advantage of seeing). We have been recommended an obstetrician and hospital in Bangkok and have been making the two-hour trip to Bangkok for check-ups at regular intervals over the past months. In the middle of February we will be going to stay in Bangkok temporarily to wait until "baby Tuck" (the baby's nickname as given by Lukas) is born. Although it is a bit of an upheaval to move away from our home and network of childcare and friends for the birth, we are thankful to be able to stay at the guest home that is run by our organization, where we have also gotten to know some friends and colleagues. As for the hospital, we are impressed with the level of care (and comfort!) available.



*Kelly's desk at the language centre (decorated for her birthday!)*

room for incoming students. Peter is hoping to finish his Level One exam before we leave and Kelly is hoping to continue studying part time after the baby is born, although it is unlikely that she will be able to finish the entire Level One before we need to move.

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Our everyday lives of the last six months have revolved around studying the Thai language fulltime at the language centre here in Lopburi. We have progressed from learning the sounds of the language to simple phrases to actually being able to hold very basic conversations to recently learning to read and write the beautiful but unfamiliar script. We are now halfway through our first year course after half a year here, so we're keeping pace. We still have roughly six more months that we can stay here and study at the language centre before needing to move on and make



*On Koh Si Chang during our Christmas break*

### Contact Information

[peterkelly@passchier.net](mailto:peterkelly@passchier.net)

[www.passchier.net](http://www.passchier.net)

skype: **passchier**

Peter: **+66 80 107 6050**

Kelly: **+66 87 663 6003**

home: **+66 36 610 429**

### Postal address (letters):

**Peter & Kelly Passchier  
Lopburi Language Centre  
P. O. Box 58  
Amphur Mueang  
Lopburi 15000  
THAILAND**

### Postal address (parcels):

**Peter & Kelly Passchier  
OMF Thailand  
P. O. Box 1100  
Don Mueang  
Bangkok 10211  
THAILAND**



*Our location(s)*



*At the ceramics factory outlet in Lampang*

The second most exciting news is that as of three weeks ago we now know where we will be moving to at the end of our year here in Lopburi. Before arriving at this decision with the national director of our organization, we took two vision field trips to visit teams we might possibly join. In October we boarded an over-night train and headed North to Lampang, a provincial capital located about one hour South-East of Chiang Mai. The team there has only been working together for less than a year and so far has established a community outreach centre as the base of their work. The main contact points with local people at this point in time are through teaching English classes and offering Kids' club activities but the vision is to see the centre expand to a place that will serve the community in a variety of ways as well as

hoping to see the development of a network of low-key house churches for those who believe in Jesus.

We were really stimulated by the vision of the work there and we could see ourselves fitting into the

team, which consists of two other families, also with young children. In November we headed South to visit Phang-nga and Nakhon-si-thammarat provinces again by way of over-night train - which Lukas absolutely loves! The teams in the South (mid-South, not deep South) work in a variety of locations from a small village recovering from the 2004 tsunami to a fair-sized towns. One team is planning to start a combined mentorship-vocational training centre for young people; another is working out of an outreach centre again with offering English classes and Kids' clubs. In Phang-nga province we visited a gorgeous beach bordered by giant trees bearing ladders and signs "tsunami climb up"; a moving tsunami memorial in a town one-third washed away by the wave; and some boats that rest where they were washed over a kilometre inland. In Paak Phanang we were treated to warm hospitality with friends new and old (some of our language student colleagues had joined the team there), which contrasted greatly to the pouring rain outside. We didn't really dry out completely until we got back to Lopburi after an epic 28 hours en route! The result of our explorations and discussions with the director are that we have been designated to the team in Lampang and in June or July of this year we will be moving to this city known for its horse-drawn carriages, ceramics, brown coal and cockerel emblem.



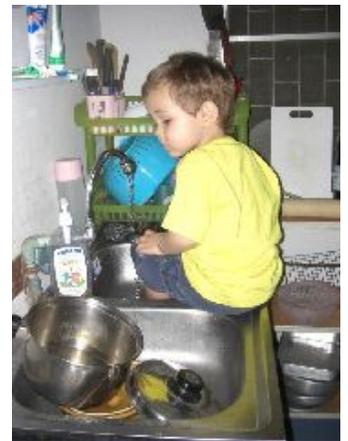
*A rainy ride*



*Our 5th anniversary*

Apart from these work-related trips, we had a family retreat/holiday in August to the beach on the Gulf of Thailand and during our Christmas break, a short but beautiful two-day getaway to an island South-East of Bangkok. Both of these times were wonderful family times of refreshment outside of the city where we enjoyed hikes, swimming, and playing in the sand as well as long conversations with each other and with friends. We even celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the end of August, walking in the

moonlight along the beach. Lukas especially enjoyed digging in the sand, throwing rocks in the sea and riding on an inner tube with Peter – although one morning the floating motion was so relaxing he fell asleep with his arms clasped around Peter's neck! He is growing up almost day by day it seems and announces with great satisfaction when he accomplishes something new, like washing his hands in the sink by himself – "I did it!" His understanding of the world is growing and one day when we were out in the car without any snacks he proposed his solution with an emphatic, "Buy snacks, Mummy!"



*Lukas washing his feet by himself - "I did it!"*

We have really enjoyed hearing from you in Christmas letters and email responses – it helps us to feel connected. We hope you have a great start to 2009 and a fulfilling year.

Lots of love and blessings,

*Peter & Kelly + Lukas + baby Tuck*