



# GARUNA MINISTRIES

A ministry of sharing the "grace, mercy and compassion" (Garuna) of Jesus in Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries.

GARUNA MINISTRIES | 11034 North 36th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85028 | www.garuna.org | info@garuna.org | Volume 23, Issue 3 | Christmas 2023

## Unwrapping Christmas

Thanks be to God for his  
indescribable gift!  
2 Corinthians 9:15



God has blessed the world by providing us with a Savior in His Son, Jesus. At Christmastime we especially reflect on the importance of that gift in our lives. **Garuna Ministries is blessed to be able to provide opportunities to unwrap, share, and attempt to describe how special this gift is for all people, but especially for our friends in Southeast Asia.** It's an absolute joy to realize that Jesus is "exactly what we needed" and even better than we could imagine or describe!

### OPEN DOORS IN THAILAND



**At this time of year, we are focused on "Multiplying the Ministry" with the purchase of a new outreach center in northern Thailand.** As we consolidate our Thai team to one location, we are finalizing plans for a new center in Chiang Mai, Thailand. From this site, we will respond to many new opportunities for training, outreach, and expansion into the hill tribe regions and nearby (closed) countries. **Please consider an end-of-year gift to help us reach our goal of \$350,000 to fund this new outreach center by the end of 2023!**

### MULTIPLYING the Ministry



### THE GIFT OF A GREAT TEAM



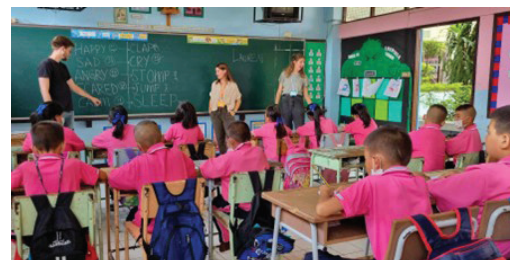
**There are growing opportunities for outreach and the Thailand team is eager to respond to the invitations.**

One of the newest developments are the invitations to come into government schools in this region to lead evangelistic English, music, guitar, and Chinese language classes while sharing Gospel lessons. The new center will provide opportunities for more classes for the community. The team is energetic and collaborative. We thank God for growing openness to His Word and teachings.



### THE GIFT OF BIBLE TRAINING AND WORSHIP

Pastor Niran leads the Luther Institute SE Asia Bible training program for the Thailand region. He spends time leading zoom classes and teaching the curriculum to varying cohorts in the region. Some study in person; others study online. There is a growing interest in the training. The new center will provide more opportunity for the preparation and gathering of Bible students, as well as a new church plant.



Concordia University-Irvine students help the Thai team lead an evangelistic English class in a Thai government school classroom as part of their "Around the World" semester program.





**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
GARUNA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL #11 LAND PURCHASE**

The Garuna leaders are excited to learn that Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Fremont, CA) raised the funds needed to buy the land for a new school site in a 24-hour campaign! (Location: The Siem Reap rice field behind them.)



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GARUNA STAFF**

These 3 Garuna school leaders are completing a bachelor's degree program in education as part of a goal to provide professional development for Garuna's teams, now totaling 69 employees.



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
GENEROUS DONORS IN THE USA!**

On a recent Garuna USA visit to Cambodia, nearly 50 villagers arrive to hear more about their new school which will be built in the coming year. This was the first time for them to meet a westerner. In addition to these families, there were 6 cows, 3 dogs, and quite a number of chickens! This 10th school will be funded by Desert Foothills Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, AZ.



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
GARUNA'S BIBLE TRAINING PROGRAM**

It's time to begin a new cohort of Bible training for teachers, pastors, deaconesses, and evangelists as 22 students graduate from a 20-course program in January. Two Garuna school "bus drivers" will join another 30 students for ongoing Bible training.





**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
A NEW TRAINING CENTER IN  
PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA**

The Luther Institute-Cambodia was dedicated 1 year ago to provide a place for outreach, training, and worship. 26 Garuna School principals, vice principals, and Bible teachers met recently for their annual fall leadership meeting.



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
THANKFUL CAMBODIAN PARENTS**

Garuna Christian School #9 was funded by a coalition of Omaha partner churches and schools, opening with 275 new students, most of whom will hear about Jesus for the first time. Their parents are thankful for this gift for their children and families.



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
CAMBODIAN STUDENTS WHO LOVE JESUS!**

There are over 1,800 students enrolled in the Garuna Schools at this time. Their loud and exuberant singing and dancing is heartwarming. They are preparing for their big Christmas outreach parties.



**INDESCRIBABLE GIFT:  
GARUNA'S 49 TEACHER AIDES**

It is a blessing to stay connected to GCS students who completed grade 6. As the students continue to attend grade 7 at the government school, they also find time to serve as teacher aides at their GCS alma mater. They are in Bible study and help with teacher tasks – our future GCS teachers!





## FROM THE CHAIRMAN: INDESCRIBABLE!



*"Thanks be to God for his  
incredible gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15*

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

WOW...How do you write an article with a key word from the text being "incredible"? Definitions of the word include **"too extreme, too unusual, or too good/bad to be adequately described."**

Thankfully, the Bible does describe and explain the wonderful gift that was given that first Christmas in the person of our Savior, Christ Jesus. What is hard to describe is the depth of the love, grace, mercy, and compassion (garuna) that motivated God to give us such a gift. We don't see that type of love anywhere else. We don't deserve that type of love. In a sense, it is almost incredible. It is outside our normal experience. But it is true. It did happen. **The fact that God would love us enough to send His Son, Jesus for us is 'extremely good'.** With the help of God's Holy Spirit and His precious Word He makes His love clear to us so that we can, with His help, make the incredible describable to others.

Cheryl & I have just returned from a very blessed trip to Southeast Asia. **Incredible** is how I often feel when I return from these trips.

***I really can't adequately convey to you the extreme sense of joy and amazement I feel when I see the dedication of our team there and the***

***blessing of God upon His Word and ministry among them.*** How do you describe the feeling of seeing 250 children very loudly and happily reciting a Bible verse about God's love? These are children who are attending a new Garuna school and who had not heard of this incredible gift before. How do you describe the feeling when two young Garuna school children with broad smiles present Cheryl & me with a hand-woven necklace with a lovely cross attached? That feeling really is incredible. **How God miraculously brings the Good News to people and how this Gospel changes lives is His incredible gift.**

The context of our text is in the very interesting chapter of 2 Corinthians 9 that emphasizes generosity and giving. When I see you sending in your gifts and when I hear of your prayers, that feeling is also ***incredible***. **It is a great joy for me to serve with Garuna where we unite those generous givers and prayers with those in Southeast Asia who generously serve and give of themselves in such challenging settings.** Thanks to each of you for your prayers and very generous support.

In the incredible love of Jesus,

**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman  
Garuna Ministries**



## Christmas Generosity Options

Thanks for sending your gifts to fund Garuna ministry Projects in SE Asia



### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY!

**Thailand "Multiplying the Ministry" Project**  
**\$350,000 by December 31, 2023**



There is still time to participate in the funding of a new Outreach Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand!

**Where Needed Most** – Any amount is greatly appreciated!

### Garuna Ministry Sponsorship Options

- Garuna Kids (K-grade 6): \$30/month
- Bible/LISA Student: \$50/month
- Garuna Teacher: \$100/month

### Have you considered these giving options?

- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over the age of 70½ to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly with no income taxes due on the rolled over or donated funds.

- **Employee Match** – Ask your employer if this option exists for you!
- **Gifts of Stock** – Garuna can receive gifts of appreciated stock.
- **Estate Planning** – Have you considered leaving a legacy gift for Garuna as a part of your estate planning?
- **Endowment Fund Gift** – Helps us plan for the future!
- **Thrivent Choice** – Garuna partners with Thrivent Financial and is eligible to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars.

If you are led to donate, your check may be made **payable to Garuna**. Gifts may be mailed to **Garuna at 11034 North 36th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85028**. You may also donate online by visiting our secure online giving page at **www.garuna.org**. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowable by law. The Garuna Foundation is a 501-c-3 nonprofit (EIN number: 86-1037570). Garuna will mail a gift receipt to the address you provide. Thank you in advance for your partnership in prayer and financial support.

For more information on making gifts, please call (602) 765-7613 or email us at [jeff@garuna.org](mailto:jeff@garuna.org).

