



the VRUGGINKS

TRAINING LEADERS IN ASIA

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Banana Bonds



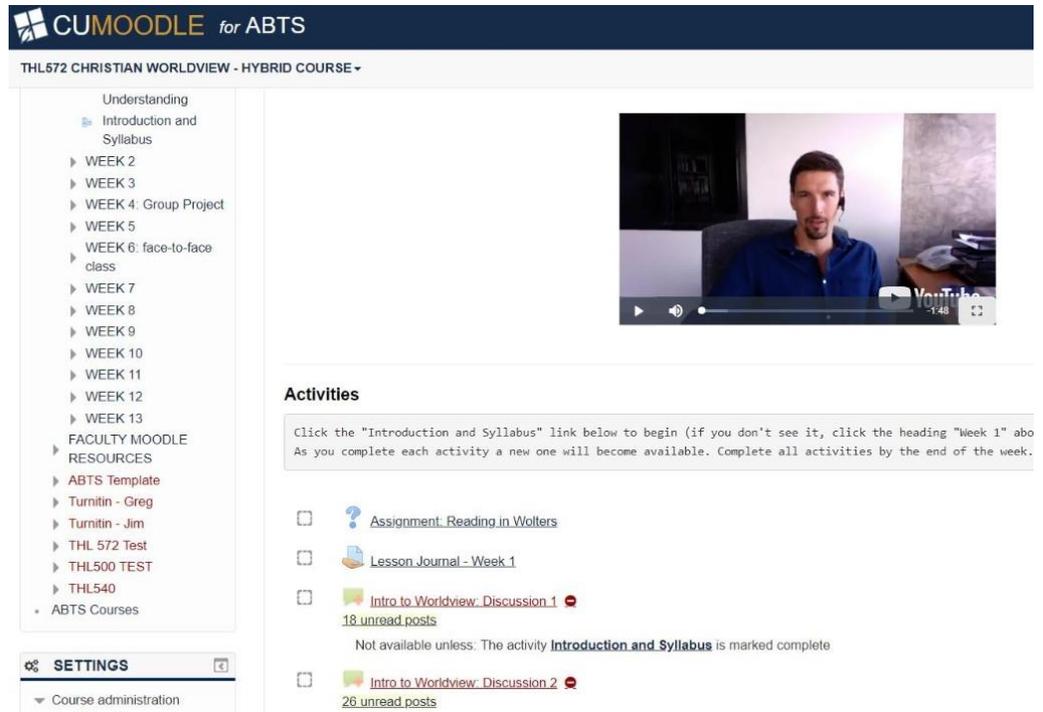
This month we have felt so much love from our Thai community! We heard from veteran missionaries that because Chiang Mai is a very transient city (i.e. lots of people coming and leaving after a short time) that it takes a long time for the Thai people to feel that you're a "permanent person" and begin to befriend and accept you. We've been here 8 months now and this month we received 3 special "welcoming" gifts.

First, Isaac befriended a construction worker who was adding a room to our neighbor's home and the two of them grilled over a little fire together. The owner of the home was so tickled over this that she came outside to meet us and gave us a bunch of bananas. Secondly, a few days later a different neighbor also gave us a bunch of bananas freshly picked from a tree in their yard. Finally, the owners of the ballet studio where our girls take dance built Rachel a ramp to make it easier for her to get inside. Rachel did not ask them to do this so it was a special surprise!

Each of these acts of kindness has been such an encouragement to us as we are slowly starting to build relationships and trust in our Thai community. Our hope and prayer is that over the years these relationships will eventually turn into friendships, and that we will have opportunities to share Christ with these sweet people.

Preparing for Online Classes

This month ABTS tested its first online class! Since one of Greg's roles at ABTS is director of online education, much of the month was spent checking, rechecking, and troubleshooting to make sure that our students have a smooth experience with the online platform. Following this class, ABTS will start to roll out a more complete online system starting in June, so Greg will also be spending much of the next month getting ready for that huge step. It's been encouraging to see how helpful the online platform has been in keeping track of student progress. With the rollout of this system, it will be much simpler to keep track of our hundreds of students across sites in several countries! Please keep Greg in prayer during this big undertaking.



Songkran Festival



This month we participated in the most loved Thai holiday, Songkran! Songkran is a three day water festival that rings in the Thai New Year. Everyone flocks to the streets with squirt guns and buckets to douse one another with water. (Click the video above left to get a feel for its craziness! The average high temperature each day right now is around 102 F (38 C), so getting wet is a treat! Our kids has a wonderful time squirting others, getting soaked form head to toe, and playing in mounds of bubbles created by special machines. Christian even declared, "This is my new favorite holiday!" which did our hearts good as the kids have been struggling with homesickness recently.

Praises and Prayer Requests

Thank you so much for praising God with us and praying for our needs. Please email us with any prayer requests you have so that we can be praying for you as well!

- 1) Praise God for our three special "welcoming" gifts, two bunches of bananas and a ramp! Please pray for our relationships with our neighbors and those in our community to continue to grow!
- 2) Praise God for a relatively smooth start of our first online ABTS class! Please keep Greg in prayer as he continues to prepare for the major online class rollout in June.
- 3) Praise God the kids enjoyed their first Songkran Festival! Please pray for the kids as they've been struggling with feeling homesick recently.

Thank you so much for all of your love and support!

Greg + Rachel

