

Electronic JOLLY Treatment



JOLLY *vt.* [*<* earlier *jot*, to *jog*] 1. to shake up or jar, as with a bumpy ride 2. to shock or surprise *vi.* To move along in a bumpy manner *n.* 1. a sudden jerk, bump, etc. 2. a shock or surprise 3. A stimulating reminder about our ministry in Muslim South-east Asia. *jollitingly adv.* *jollity*

Feb 2019

FEB

26: C back to Thailand

MAR

7-22: Visits to South Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

APL

8-12: In Bangkok leading 1-week intensive course

PRaise

1. For our low-gear cool season stay-cation.
2. That N continues to tick boxes in the academic and social departments.
3. For S's strategic service portfolio.
4. That significant progress in submitting a number of journal articles, and that C is working out how things work in Bangkok.
5. That it was possible for C to come back to NZ to be with M.

PRAYER

1. Pray for M at the beginning of her 2nd year at University, specifically her living situation, and that her circle of supportive friends will grow.
2. Pray for Mar 7-22 during which C will be "on the road", particularly while meeting with our Indonesian partners, and presenting workshops for practitioners in South Thailand.
3. Pray for negotiations to extend C's contract for another 6-12 months at the end of March.
4. Pray for the team in South Thailand who will soon be receiving some more new members. This will be a lot of work, and the team is still relatively small.

Chris (otherwise known as I) is writing this at a petrol station at an undisclosed location in the lower North Island. I'm back in NZ for a 2-week 'private visit'. While we have come "home" for 1 wedding and 2 funerals during our stints in Southeast Asia, this is the first "private" visit that's been paid for by my university in Bangkok. In previous years, I never availed myself of this "freebie". It's amazing how ones' priorities change once one of your kids is living elsewhere. Wonder how your Christmas/New Years was, and whether you got to get way for a break. For us, the last week of the 2018 and the first of 2019 was weird, as it was our first without Michaela. We toyed with the idea of selling our race horses and/or liquidating our collection of Mad Magazine from the 1970s (does not include the March edition from the mid-70s), but we thought better of it. Suck it up! She's a big girl now, right? Then, at church just before Christmas, most of our friends arrived with *their* kids who had flown in. Sandra and I looked at each other and said something like, "what were we thinking!?" After Christmas (with friends) the cool weather arrived, which we enjoyed. I (otherwise known as Chris) enjoyed doing lots of walking. Sandra & Nathan enjoyed their staycation. She had changed down gears the week before Christmas, having crossed off a few things from her list. I joined a colleague leading the team in South Thailand on his visa trip to northern Malaysia. After getting back home, I got back into my writing, which is going very well. Made the decision to concentrate on submitting as many of the (many) completed conference papers and respectable works-in-process to journals as I can before .

By mid-Jan, I was still limping with low-level misery. After talking with our field director, we made the decision that I'd come back to NZ for 2 weeks to spend some time with Michaela before she begins her second year of university on Feb 26. As they say, "take the money and run." As we say, "After 19 years overseas, perhaps we should be less concerned about what people think about 'private visits'". Spent the first 5 days together at my mother's place in the Hawkes Bay, and we have seen each other most days since then. It would be fair to say that Michaela has not had a good summer, and her current flatting situation is sub-optimal in a number of respects. A few wheels fell off *after* we made the decision to zip back, and we now see the shadow of the safe, steady hand of God. We've had lots of good chats. It is so good to be with her. Nothing beats "being there", aye! My favourite *praxis* bumper-sticker is "pray more than you say." While I have recently added "pray more than you plan", we have been working on an accommodation Plan B, and Plan C for her. There are a few things that I have wanted to *say*. Have done so without having wandered even a millimeter over the line between seriously sagely welcome advice, and unwelcome parental interference. During one of my monotonous, monotonal, monologues (that Michaela wrote extensive notes on), I spotted a pig fly by.

Nathan continues to do well. Really enjoying seeing his interactions with his mates. One of them has been having a hard time, and we have been impressed with empathy, and down-to-Earth decency. Sandra has recently enjoyed attending a number of member care/pastoral care training events. In January, she was also away in Singapore for 4 days, sitting in on leadership meetings. Settled on the best ways to strategically serve, takes time but the current recipe tastes good. There has been some improvement in communication with my boss at the university in Bangkok. Getting a better idea about who knows how to do their job, and who (sadly) are best to avoid. Pleased that shaving my head removed the temptation to tear it out. You'll notice that there are some prayer requests related to re-negotiating my present contract that expires at the end of March for another 6-12 months.

What's around the corner? I'll be away for 2 weeks in March. I'll be doing some fieldwork in South Thailand, and Northern Malaysia, attending a meeting in Indonesia with our partners, giving 3 talks at universities in Malaysia, and leading some training sessions for God's merry band of do-gooder mis-fits. Love this fusion of academia and grass-roots

practice. Planned this before deciding to come to NZ. Pray for full tanks, clear heads, and calm hearts. Have been better at being away less, so this is best viewed as a blip. Pray on!