

Mercy MOMENTS



Lost and Found



Thai Navy SEALs posted incredible video footage of what they called **The Operation the World Would Never Forget**. These images are still frames taken from this video.

The remarkable events which unfolded in Thailand over the past few weeks have grabbed the attention of the world. This amazing rescue of the twelve boys and their coach from a seemingly impossible situation deep in the Tham Luang Caves shines a light on the power of courage, positivity, hope, faith and prayer.

The multi-national rescue team put their lives on the line for the boys and in subsequent interviews have shared their concerns and fears about their capacity to bring the boys out alive. Yet they still tried and still hoped that their mission was a rescue not a recovery.

The selflessness of the coach, Ekapol Chanthawong, who taught the boys to meditate in the endless dark hours of confinement is outstanding. Buddhist meditation and mindfulness kept the boys calm and centred in a situation which invited panic. He gave up his little food to keep the boys safe. He taught the

boys to find water. He remained calm. His apology and his gracious words are a model of courage not often seen in our world of action heroes.

The Thai officials also controlled the operation amazingly – shielding the boys from the media and continuing to keep them calm after their rescue. Their approach is a reminder to us all that human life, not media sensation, should be our primary focus.

The rescuers, including ex-Thai Navy SEAL, Saman Kunan who died in the mission, showed the power of co-operation and focus. British, American, Australian, Belgian, Danish, Finnish, Chinese, Canadian and Thai diving experts worked with one aim – to bring the boys out alive and they succeeded. What a blueprint for other areas in which the world could work together.

The impact of this rescue on the life of the boys and their families is being carefully managed but one positive is that the coach and three of the boys, who are stateless, will be given legal Thai citizenship. The plight of stateless people has been brought into sharp focus – there are millions of such people living around the world – displaced people who are lost in their own way.

International Rescue Committee's Regional Vice President in Asia, Sanna Johnson, said, "We hope that this tale will shine a light on the dreadful challenges faced by stateless peoples both in Thailand and across the region".

All the world's sacred texts espouse the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). We all hope that when we are in dire straits someone will help us – for no other reason than our shared humanity.

REFLECTION

- > What aspect of the Thai cave rescue gives you hope for the future?
- > Who are the unsung heroes in your ministry?