

# MoesGoes to Cambodia

MAY  
2016

## NEW YEAR, NEW LIFE

**If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.**  
- Romans 8:11

March and April brought with them some of the hottest weather in Cambodia's history, accompanied by drought, dried and crumbling palm fronds, and a whole lot of sweat. It's an ironic time to be thinking about normal spring concepts of birth, rejuvenation, and new life, and yet not one but two holidays over the past two months have asked us to do just that: the never-ending celebration of Khmer New Year, and, of course, Easter.

At the end of March, Kruos Church celebrated Easter with a drama by church staff, a fellowship 'pancake' brunch (Khmer pancakes, though, are thin and made of rice flour and filled with meat and veggies), and a lesson on the treasure of new life that we receive from Jesus (represented for the children's congregation with candy in eggs, naturally). In mid-April (or rather, for most of the month) the entire country of Cambodia celebrated Khmer New Year (which follows the lunar calendar). Families returned to their home communities (we traveled to my host father's home in Siem Reap - we're pictured above visiting Angkor Wat as a family) and relaxed, ate, played traditional games, sprayed one another with water and baby powder, and, of course, danced at the pagoda. It's been a time of simple joy.

A popular song played during Khmer New Year is called "Rom Ni Keng Jerng" - it translates to "Grind Your Heel" and is accompanied by a festive leg twist. It's meant to just be fun, but I think the sentiment represents both holidays well. Both Easter and Khmer New Year are about

celebrating the things most essential to our happiness (family, friends, and faith) and focusing our energy on them in our daily life. These holidays have been a beautiful reminder to me to focus on where my feet are today in the world, and I've been re-energized to "grind my heel" into the ground here: to focus on relationships and on being present during the few months I have left.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

\*For myself and fellow YAGMs around the world, that we can 'grind our heels' in and be present in our communities during these last months of service.

\*For the 8 YAGMs who have been called to Cambodia next year, that they find peace in this period of discernment.

\*For those in Cambodia and around the world who struggle to find desired purpose or financial security, that they may find personal success and fulfillment in their careers, livelihoods, and vocations.





# BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY & PURPOSE

Most of Kruos Village Church's ministry projects are designed in some way to provide financial benefits to families that struggle with money. Perhaps most influential is our Agricultural Development program, which provides training and supplies to over 200 area farmers to develop sustainable gardens full of vegetables that can be grown and harvested in the non-rice season (photo, right). This program also provides the training and supplies for farmers interested in chicken rearing for egg and meat production.

The project is sorely needed in this one-crop community (most farmers only grow rice, which, due to poor irrigation and an extremely dry season, is only harvested once annually). Even for some of the major crop producers in my community, a successful rice season brings in something between \$500-\$1000 USD. For most families,

especially those with children in school, this is not enough as an annual income. Indeed, a bad harvest due to poor weather or disease could financially cripple a family. Many families (including children) turn to making baskets (photo, left) as a way to supplement income.

YAGM Cambodia spent our spring retreat focused on the nature of vocation, and how to find purpose and fulfillment in one's life choices. I've been thinking about the role vocation plays in communities like Kruos, where financial hardship gives individuals less options to pursue careers that are mentally and emotionally engaging to the individual. Something we discussed on retreat that I experience ten-fold here is that fulfilled vocation can be developed in ways beyond what an individual does to earn income: it is found in community engagement, prioritization of family, and an unending desire to grow personally and learn more about the world at large.

By providing financial agency to the Kruos community, Kruos Church helps individuals worry less about financial instability so that they can devote more time to living with joy and grace in all aspects of their lives.



## THANK YOU

I'd like to express my gratitude to those that have sponsored a day of my year in Cambodia, especially those who have sponsored days in March or April:

Cathe Cich	John Moes
Colleen & Brian Hanson	Pat & Kathy O'Connor Family
Jennifer Huart	Lynne Ridenour
Natasha Kushner	Mary & Marvin Rohr
Taisa Kushner	Mary & Pete Swanson
Mangan Family	Wayne & Trish Thompson
Laura Mirau	Thomas & Katie Walt Family
Ben & Sharon Moes	Cheryll White
Jackie Moes	
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**KHMER WORDS OF THE MONTH:**



**Chnaam Thmei "New Year"**