

MoesGoes to Cambodia

JANUARY
2016

JOY IN MOMENTS GREAT AND SMALL

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God - 1 Corinthians 10:31

I'm a person who lives for the loud moments - once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that make my heart race. I've always struggled with the small moments and average days that pass without anything particularly special going on. Truthfully, that's part of the reason I jumped at the opportunity to live in Cambodia for a year - how special! How Challenging! How Exciting!

I've been blessed the past few months with many loud moments - indeed, many loud *days*. My coworker Muntar invited me to her neighborhood's Khatan (a three-day celebration where offerings are made to the local temple), and we ate boboa (Khmer porridge) and danced in circles around the pagoda. Cambodia YAGMs had our first fall retreat in the rainforests of Ratinikiri, where we swam in freshwater lakes and rode longboats to visit Khmer tribal communities. I celebrated a birthday with cake and a frosting fight. Four different missions groups from Australia and Singapore have passed through Kruos, bringing with them medical supplies, dinners at new restaurants, community baptisms, and plenty of dancing. The latest mission group was here for perhaps the 'loudest' moment I've had yet: Christmas in Cambodia, complete with traditional dances, a pageant (I was Herod's Servant), Khmer Christmas Carols, and literal dancing 'round the Christmas tree.

As I continue to settle into life in Cambodia, and novelties of daily life here become increasingly 'normal', I'm reminded that another reason I chose to do YAGM is *because* days would become unexciting. I'm slowly

learning to find the beauty of simplicity: taking walks through the village with my sisters, laughing at a joke my student makes, learning a new way to cook vegetables, harvesting rice again and again under the vast Khmer sky.

In moments great and small, I'm finding goodness here.

PRAYER REQUESTS

*For Kruos Village Church as expands its ministries in 2016: the movement of our Daily Bread program to neighboring villages, the addition of more classes and an enhanced school system, and the hiring of new staff to guide these developments.

*For deeper relationships, continued openness to new opportunity, and finding as much joy in the quiet moments as I currently find in the loud.



REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING

While I work in a variety of capacities in the Kruos Community, my main job is to teach English, both at church for village children (free classes offered to them), and with 8th and 9th graders at the local secondary school.

I won't lie - I've wrestled with being a teacher. I struggle with unfamiliar learning styles, confusing government standards, and translating grammar into an unfamiliar alphabet. At the beginning, I especially struggled with my identity as a teacher here, as I had never really considered teaching English to be a large part of ministry.

I'm realizing quickly, however, how vital this education is not only for the people here but for the development of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia as a whole.

First and foremost, English is a language that is required for almost any outward-facing job in Cambodia, from the quickly growing tourist-industry, to any job that deals with international economic development (which is most larger business jobs, as most of



Cambodia's economic growth is being jump-started by foreign businesses). This means that for the youth of my community, learning English is vital for getting a good job and being able to reinvest in their own community's growth.

Because English is such a strongly desired skill set (as are some of the church's other course offerings, including coursework on agriculture and using computers), the fact that the church in this rural village offers these courses for basically free is a HUGE deal. This means more people than ever, both children and adults, are coming to the church every single day, and subsequently being exposed to its ministry and messages.

It also means that the church is actively engaging in the message that Jesus preached: reaching out to its community and providing true "love thy neighbor" services without regard to religion, ethnicity, or any other factor. That fact alone has helped me really come to appreciate the work I get to engage in this year and the people I get to do it alongside.



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 November or December:

Cathe Cich	Pat & Kathy O'Connor
Renee & Tim Gallaher, in honor of Sara	Family
Mark & Lisa Leutem	Avis Peters
Jean Meier	Bill & Carla Phillips
Ben & Sharon Moes	Mary & Marvin Rohr
Bill Moes	Shelly Rohr
Jackie Moes	Buster & Helen Schneider
Jill Moes	Mary & Pete Swanson
John Moes	Steve Weber



JESSICA MOES

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KHMER WORD OF THE MONTH:

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Sophomongkol - "Happiness"