



# **The Khmer Chronicle**

**The Cambodian Ministry Newsletter  
for Immanuel Lutheran Church, Snor Village  
Puok District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia  
Fall (In the north) 2023  
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**Immanuel Lutheran Church  
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## **Permanent Markers**

I have been stateside for a bit over two months. The time has quickly flown by. Half of that time has been easily taken up connecting with family and friends, and ministry partners. The remaining time was just trying to sort out life in general for me. I had climbed over a lot of boulders on the road in those months and I was exhausted. Taking furlough time meant that I had just switched channels, completing stuff at home. For a while, it was a bit much...

Years ago we wrote, in a previous newsletter, about ministry changes when you get on an airplane, reculturing back to one's starting point, crossing the ocean, returning to one's passport country. For a while it still oft times does not seem like a good fit, be it going to your visa country, or returning to your passport home. Of course going home is perfect to see family and friends, and to sleep in one's 'own' bed for a bit. But still...

There are a good number of articles

out there aimed at any of us who have taken up this call and traveled somewhere outside our culture and comfort zone to share life with those whom we grow to love so deeply. This will never change in total. There are many perspectives on this topic. And while we may want to put people, in general, into black and white categories, that too would never happen.

This tenure was not an easy one, and definitely not for the faint of heart. I knew that as I headed out. I just didn't comprehend how, in that planning stage.

And, I can honestly say that I was a bit determined to do this trek. Ask my adult kids and close friends. Yes, you can shake your head up and down. Full speed ahead.

Also, my reason for going, as I slowly learned, was not at all in line with what my Father had in mind for me, and yet He showed me His faithfulness in each step of the way.

**That is the permanent marker I saw along all of those days. God's faithfulness in all and every circumstance prevailed and led the way. He used a set of rainbow colored ones for the record.**

**Now, if perchance I pulled out an erasable marker, or a washable one, I so learned that He, at some juncture, would switch out that marker back to the permanent one, one more time, again and again. On the job training, one step at a time.**

**So much had changed during and after the lockdown times in Cambodia, just as they had here, almost around each and every corner. At least where I was living. Reminders of life altering events or decisions made along the way were so evident. Some were good, but many were not. That is where I also found the markers of God's activity and what He wanted me to see, learn, absorb, and be in counsel with Him.**

**As I look/read His book, I recall the grand parade/lifestyle of the Pharisees, who had great life skills, and yet they could not relate to Jesus. And then we know about Moses in Exodus, in whose encounter with Pharaoh, left no doubt in anyone's mind that God was in action mode. At a time when it would have been convenient to hide in the shadows, he boldly proclaimed God's plan for His people.**

**So, as I close this 'permanent marker' topic for now, I ask each of the readers**

**here, how much of a grip does each of us have as we now go about our days, wherever God puts us. God's soul hole, what are we going to fill it with, since we have a culture that tears at our bare bottom. He has a permanent marker for each of us. We need to use it. We need to discern what God has for us to do every step of the way. At least I know I do. And it won't always be easy.**

### **Life on the Farm....Behind the Church**

**The southwest monsoon season in Siem Reap is from May into November. There is a lot of rain and a lot of humidity in those six months. While we, in the north would think that this time of the year is not very welcomed, consider that these are the months you, if you lived in the Siem Reap area, would need to raise your crops (like rice), grow fish in the rice paddies, and grow a garden to feed your family, and provide an income from the residuals. It is also the time to bring on those farm babies and fatten them to go to market, and a time to capture as much water as you are able to store for the other six months of the year, to manage your home during those dry days.**

**This time of the year is oft times very lean for those local folks who rely on the tourist population**



(This is the land behind the church building where the farm is)

flocking in to see the temples and enjoy the tropical days next to a pool, doing cultural tours, or just seeing what the country has to offer. Add into that the country has suffered tourist wise from the pandemic, and a great number of folks aren't jumping to come back and see this beautiful place any time soon.

I came home late June, and it was already apparent that the tourist numbers were down. As I live in the local commune area outside the main tourist area, I see the daily struggle of providing revenue to pay bills, feed the family, and pay school fees. There is no news media to shred the news into tiny bits either. It is in plain sight.

The struggle in the local community goes even deeper when there is a church positioned there. If all of the factors I mentioned above are there, then the church itself is also at risk, but also in the position in itself to dig in with those households to keep the community afloat during this time.

In Snor and the surrounding areas, this was ever so obvious to me, even though my limited language skills would have sheltered me from a lot of

the anguish around me. Fortunately I could see with my eyes, and I watched body language, and how people talked. It spoke volumes.

This is the first year for the farm in operation, and it was late getting started as well. One additional thing that has come around in the midst of all the rain is a new idea for this community to raise Japanese golden snails for income purposes. Snails are good to raise and harvest. Nothing of/on a snail goes to waste. The 'slime' of the snail is used in the cosmetic industry, the snail itself is used as escargot, and the shells are used as ornaments or ground and used as they have a high level of calcium..

Stay tuned for the latest on the farm as it matures and celebrates its first year of operation.



## English in Action



Pastor Ravy continues to teach these eager learners English through his Hope School. I consider it a privilege to be a part of this ministry with Ravy. He also does Lutheran Hour ministry radio broadcasting in the province, with what I understand is a growing audience. He is a dynamic servant.



## Knee Thoughts

Praise and prayers for the ongoing farm development.

Prayers for Pastor's touring business to prosper as the tourists arrive.

Praise and prayers for sharing His love message to everyone sent our way.

Prayers for the journey ahead with many spinning plates of service.

Thank you so much !

## Giving Page

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