

July 26, 2011

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It has been a long time between newsletters, and again, I have no good excuse.

Our boys, Micah and Jesse, finished their school year last month. Now they are living out in the village where they largely grew up. The boys are enjoying their time home in the villages but realizing it is not quite the same as before. Many of their friends have left the villages, either finding work far away or having gone to school in the city. Jesse finds change hard to deal with. He wants everything to stay the same, a slipping hope in this fast-changing country and world. Debbie and I spend most of our week in the village, though we usually go into the city for the weekend for work responsibilities. I am overseeing the construction of a house in the city where we expect our family to live for years to come for the portion of time we will be in the city. I am also trying to keep an eye out on the work of our fellow EMM missionaries, who are on home leave in the USA for several months. Their work is in the city. Debbie usually goes with me to the city so she can stay in touch with her support group in the city. She also has some work in the city at this time. Two wonderful Christian doctors at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota are working with Debbie to try to figure out why heart failure is the #1 killer of young infants in our villages. They have hired Mr. Kheang, a young bright Cambodian man to work with them and Debbie. He will do a lot of oversight and administrative tasks, but Debbie will be training and coaching him for a while until he gets up to speed. He lives in the city. The two American doctors live in Minnesota, and will help from there by email and phone. Right now Mr. Kheang and Debbie are trying to obtain Cambodian government permission for the study.

Revelation Teaching

My Revelation teaching continues, although it doesn't get any easier. Each new chapter is a major challenge to me, even though I have many times felt God giving me some insight into difficult passages. I do my study and preparation for each lesson, yet I often head off to the teaching feeling less confident than I want to be, but again and again it seems, as I start to teach, the Lord provides leading and shows me just where to focus the teaching. Nevertheless, I still frequently have to answer, "I don't know the answer to that question" when the Christian leaders ask some of their questions about the passages. Some time ago I visited one of the more distant pastors and he told me the Revelation study has been encouraging to him because he felt his own situation reflected to some degree happenings in Revelation. Last year, while we were in the US, there was a drought in his area. Local villagers decided that his Christian church was the cause of the drought because Cambodia's gods were angry with the church. One morning, about 200 some folks marched to his church and house with axes, machetes, and heavy hoes. They told him to get out of the way while they destroy the church. He heard they were coming since the night before and he and his wife laid awake most of the night praying. But an interesting thing happened. Often 1-2 policemen sleep in his church at night because they have no post to sleep in. When they heard the night before that the mob would be coming early in the morning, they began calling nearby authorities. By early morning about a dozen police and various local officials had

gathered in front of the church and stood in a line to block the unruly mob. Before they arrived, an officer turned to the pastor and told him, "You stay out of this and don't say anything. We'll take care of this." They told the angry villagers to go home. At first they would not go. Soon the provincial governor arrived in his large Landcruiser. He had driven nearly 2 hours from the provincial capital. He came over to the pastor's wife and asked if she was afraid. She replied "yes. " He said, "don't worry, you don't need to be afraid. There are other Christians in this country. Even I have relatives who are Christian." Eventually, the mob returned home, having been told if they didn't, the authorities would take legal action against them. I couldn't help but think of St. Paul's incidents and how many different ways God intervenes in the lives of his servants. There is no guarantee the Cambodian church will always enjoy such protection from the government, but we are grateful to God for the time being, knowing more difficult times will eventually come upon the church in much of the world. Jesus promised rough times will eventually come. Thank you to those who have been praying for the Revelation teaching.

Update on Mr. Nyaa

Mr. Nyaa has not returned for any chemotherapy treatments, as the doctors advised him. At the moment his health is good. He has gained weight and is doing hard work, like plowing with his oxen. His voice is back, which means the tumor is much smaller. We continue to visit him from time to time and encourage him to follow the Lord. He says he will and he reads whatever Christian material we give him, but still he is not willing to join the other local Christians in fellowship and worship. Thank you to those who have been praying for him. Don't stop.

Debbie

Debbie started showing some modest signs of mania 3 weeks ago. Generally, she was still functioning pretty well, but the modest symptoms persisted and I was becoming concerned her condition could worsen or deteriorate. We made some minor adjustments in her medication a couple times, contacted her doctor, and now she is doing very well. We haven't seen any more signs for a week now. I am very hopeful, and very thankful to God. Any prayers for her would be great.

As always, we very much appreciate your prayers, encouragement, and support in all the different ways you give it. Thank you. Please also pray for the Cambodian church.

By God's grace,
John Coats