

News

MART-JAN &
TALITHA
JOY, MICHA
AND AMY

Our help comes from the
LORD, who made
heaven and earth.
Psalm 121



The simple lesson from a plant

Looking around us is a simple but effective way to learn. We would like to share a lesson that we have seen while watching the plants at our balcony.

It was because we love our place to be cosy that we decided to have some green on our balcony. So we travelled with a local 'tuk-tuk' to the close by place where they sell plants and stuff (an informal shop just on the side of the road) and soon after that we found some plants. Nice green bushes with red flowers, beautiful! So, after a little talk and some bargaining we headed home with the plants in the 'tuk-tuk'. And yes, the result was what we expected, it was just so much nicer.

But, soon after that the flowers disappeared and what remained was a green bush, not so nice as it was

before. It was still alive of course but it didn't flourish as before. It was a pity! We've just kept the plants and give them some water every day. Then, lately, we saw a lot of new knobs begin to grow, and by now one of the two plants is as red as before, having beautiful flowers again. The other plant isn't yet full of flowers but they will come soon. All the plants needed was a little time, rest and care to settle and get used to their new place.

We feel a bit like these plants. During the last year we felt like we have been moved to much and, after a difficult time, had to 'root' again. Our 'flowers' disappeared. It took time to get used to things again and, at last, to flourish and strive again.

We don't know to what extent this analogy works. Do we already see the flowers or do we only see some knobs yet? Are we striving already? However, we feel like we are 'home' more than

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before and we enjoy growing relations and friendships. It is amazing to be able to connect to people in their own beautiful language.

The analogy does go at least a little bit further. We water the plants because of the hot climate here. They grow and flourish because of that. In the same way our God did and does take care of us every day anew! We as well do flourish by His care. He knows what we need and provides, we want to trust Him. He who made that plants (Psalm 121) does also take care of us. Every day. Isn't He amazing?

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This News is sent out about 4 times a year in order to inform you well about the things that are happening in our lives and enables you to pray with us. Feel free to forward this letter to others.

You can subscribe or unsubscribe via our website www.2followus.wordpress.com. On our website you will also find more information and a BLOG. If you have any questions please ask us!

LANGUAGE STUDIES

One of our main activities is still language study. Language is so intertwined with normal life that we see again and again how important it is. Every meeting, every talk, every possible friendship, it all starts with the language: listening, talking, sharing...

We are happy to enjoy the language school and our results are so far so good. Of course there is a lot to learn, and therefore we keep going with it. We decided not to study full-time together anymore, so now we alternate and Mart-Jan is doing the full-time studies (he just started level 7), Talitha has finished up to level 5.

These numbers will probably not say so much to most of you but it means that we can have a normal talk with the people on the street. Think about all the 'normal' topics, all kinds of buying things, sharing about how we feel and what we would like to do. And of course ask the questions visa-versa! Besides speaking and listening we also learn how to read and write,

grammar and how a language 'works'. From time to time we have homework tasks and we are sent on the streets every now and then to question people about a certain topic.

Lately there was a feast called "Pchum Ben", and we asked the people what this all meant. What does it mean and what do people do? During these talks we gain insight in the culture more and more. Why do people do the things the way they do them..? Very interesting!

The language school organises lessons on culture every Friday. Think about a Cambodian wedding, or how does hierarchy work here? A African joke says "western people have clocks, we have time"... To what extend does this apply to the Cambodian people? These are all examples in which we have a lot to learn.

Culture and religion are closely intertwined with each other. Most of the Cambodian people are Buddhist and all elements of it are found in the culture. It is interesting to explore more and more of it. We see, for example, that fear plays a big role in their lives. On the contrary we have a love, given by our God and Father that is without fear. We long to testify of this great love, even now when our language is still so limited.

Please pray for us to understand the people more and more, both their language and the cultural parts!

FUTURE-IDEAS

Ultimately we have not moved to Cambodia to study the language and culture but we would like to help the people here and share our faith in Jesus Christ with them. In our previous newsletter we have informed you about our partnership with GOWW and the fact that they stopped working with us. During the last months we did get into contact with a new organisation, Alongsiders, and we are working towards serving together with them.

Alongsiders has its roots in Cambodia and aims to help young, mostly poor Cambodians in their difficult lives.

Practical information

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Financial support:

We're grateful for those who want to support us financially. Please use the bank account as stated below:

Foundation: Nehemia (ANBI)
Please note: Project church-work
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*There is no fear in love,
but perfect love casts
out fear.*

(1 John 4:18 ESV)

Think about all kinds of skills they would need for their lives. Most important of all, Alongsiders would like to tell them about a God who loves them and about His Son who died for them.

Alongsiders is about discipleship. They create couples in which the older helps the younger. Older brothers reach to younger brothers and older sisters reach out to younger sisters. Both of them come from the same circumstances and can understand where the other is going through. The way Alongsiders has chosen to do discipleship is very well rooted in the Cambodian culture.

For those who would like to read more about Alongsiders, please click the link [here](#).

Your questions are very much welcomed by our Home Front Team (HFT) and of course feel welcome to sent them to us as well.

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We are very grateful for the time that is granted to get to know each other and see God's hand in where to serve. At the time of writing there are some options that connect to our passion and skills. We are enthusiastic and we will look for God's hand in the rest of the process.



FAMILY UPDATE

Life here is, as it probably is for you, mostly filled with normal things. Duties, daily routines and so on. Sometimes enjoyable, sometimes not so. Being a family, home-schooling, language studies, friendships, work in the house, necessary shopping (costs so much more time than in Holland), and the list goes on. Life in another country keeps extra intensive, but not always spectacular or cool as some people think.

But, and that is probably also true for you, there are moments that touch us, like a meeting we had with Bong Wi where we wrote about in our Dutch prayer-letter. (English version [here](#)) Beautiful moments that touch us, but also moments when we are confronted with pain and sorrow. They remind us why we are here and why we choose to continue, go on, and reach out.

During the summer, after being a full year in Phnom Penh, we took a break at the sea in Kep. We've enjoyed the fresh air, the sea, and all the green. To be honest, we do miss the sea! We have walked a lot, had fun swimming and discovered new places.

Our kids are doing fine! We did look up some pictures about last year together with them and how have they all been changed! So much growth in so many areas. Joy and Micha have started a new year of homeschooling. They are used to having school in our home and are doing fine. Of course there are 'boring' days, but did you expect differently;-)? During the last months they worked about indians, arts, science & space. Joy and Micha are hungry to know all about it and that makes teaching exciting for all of us. They also enjoy the local and

international contacts here with other kids. Amy is a lively and happy girl, already 1,5 years old. She has decided to go look after her borders, do papa and mama allow me to..? It keeps us busy (and happy).

ITEMS FOR - THANKSGIVING:

1. give thanks for God's faithfulness and care every day. We count our blessings!
2. give thanks for a good start with the homeschooling.
3. give thanks for 2nd-mile, the church we visit. A great place!
4. give thanks for growing contacts with the local people.
5. give thanks for the progress with the language studies at G2K.
6. give thanks for the pleasant visit of Eunice Massar last summer. She taught the kids and gave them very enjoyable weeks!

ITEMS FOR - PRAYER:

1. pray that our relation with the Lord will deepen every day again.
2. pray for strength, energy, faithfulness, health for all the (normal) things of every day life.
3. pray for the option to serve together with Alongsiders. As long as doors continue to open we steadily move forward.
4. Pray for the contacts with Sak, our househelper, for Heng, the tuk-tuk driver, for Bong Wi, the fruit-lady and for our land lord and his family.

We are encouraged time after time by all your encouragements through prayers and thanksgiving, gifts, messages and more. Many thanks for that!

Warm greetings, Mart-Jan & Talitha, Joy, Micha and Amy



KIDS 2 KIDS

On our website we have made a specific part **for kids!**
Did you already make the little boat?

We have placed some new pictures last week. Enjoy them on the website via [this link!](#)