



MART-JAN &
TALITHA

JOY
MICHA
AMY



Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD,
all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell
of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory
among the nations, his marvelous works among all
the peoples! (Psalm 96:1-3)

Only a few days left in Cambodia

The children keep track of the calendar for several months now. Only 100 days, 75, 50 and now the count is less than ten, a little time left. We are looking forward to it. Boxes are filling the rooms and appointments with friends are filling the evenings. Saying goodbye is hard. In this newsletter we'll let you catch up.

Our feelings are easy to phrase in one word: transition. We are in the middle of it. Yet still in Cambodia but emotionally somewhere between Cambodia and the Netherlands. Arranging things for the time when we are back in the Netherlands and meanwhile of course we live here like usual. The kids club and the Bible study are no longer at our home – from January we were able to hand them over to local believers. Really cool, but suddenly you are out of the game. And the same is true for Shalom Valley. Of course, we are still

part of it, but not totally. Decisions are simply made without me (Mart-Jan). Which is very good for sure, nothing wrong with that. But, after having been the director for four years of the whole complex it takes time to adjust. To let go, speaking words of trust, encouragement, cheering up. And at the same time pulling back, go through things, saying goodbye, making preparations. It is a period full of emotions, because with every person we say goodbye to there is a story connected. Do you know, the time we shared at the hospital, that miscarriage, that huge amount of stress at work? Those steps in faith we could take together? Precious, beautiful and very difficult to let go.

But no minor mood up here. Surely not. Gratitude, feeling very grateful fills us to the top. Shalom Valley has been a blessing already to literally thousands of children and young ones, the kids club and Bible study continue as usual. In a sense we were able to make ourselves

out of use, no longer part of the work. So we are grateful. And we are also grateful for the new challenge that the Lord gives us in the Netherlands: Alongsiders Europe.

In this newsletter we will tell you a bit more about how we are doing, about Alongsiders Europe (and Alongsiders Nederland), and how we will start working with it. We will also tell how the first period in the Netherlands (DV) will look and of course we will give you again thank and prayer points. Surely in this period of transition we ask you to keep praying with us. Prayer is so super important, it joins us, it directs us, it protects and encourages. Do you join us in prayer? Thank you for all your involvement throughout these years! We pray and ask that this again may be so in this new season. Mission is something we do together; this is true for Cambodia but also for the Netherlands. It is really cool to move along together in this way.

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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.com On our website you will also find more information and our BLOG. If you have any questions please ask us!

SAYING GOODBYE DOES NOT EXIST...

According to me, this was the title of a Dutch song from Marco Borsato. A song about saying goodbye which does not exist. And even though it is not a pure Christian song it does share a feeling of missing, remembrance and all the emotions attached. To say goodbye to something you don't value is easy, there is no emotion attached. But saying goodbye to something you treasure does something to you. It hurts, it is difficult. We notice in this period of saying goodbye that we love Cambodia. The country, the people, the places we have been, experiences, and on top of the list are of course friends.

But on the other hand there are many things we won't miss. The power failure that we have almost every day, the speakers from the neighbors that make the roof plates tremble, no thank you. Or the rain that penetrates the house in the rainy season, the rats, the mold. Just a few examples.

And so we do look forward to the Netherlands. The seasons, and the cold. And - of course - family and friends. The local church, worshipping in our heart language. More energy due to the fact that we will surely NOT take the neighbors speakers with us;-). No more sweating every single day. Lovely.

It's not all looking forward though. How was living in the Netherlands - what has changed? Do people have time in the Netherlands? Will we be 'sucked' into the busyness and rush of life? Always busy-busy-busy? How do we make new friends?

So trusting is the key-word. And that we do. Trusting is Jesus in the first place. He is our Lord and He leads us. Not so long ago I was reading Psalm 23 - He refreshes, He leads, He encourages. That is our Lord.

And so it is a potluck of feelings and emotions inside all five of us. When we step back and take a look at all that is happening we often tell each other of God's goodness. He is faithful and His faithfulness will never faint. That we rest in.

So, saying goodbye does not exist. That is true, and so we process this period in Cambodia and treasure it in our hearts. We treasure the relations and the great and beautiful things we were allowed to do with and for Christ. So, no goodbye but a grateful remembering.

OUR PLANNING

This sounds like a word fitting to us, to plan and to arrange. To think things through, taking responsibility. And yet this is true unto a certain level, because who knows the future? It is all DV: as the Lord wishes.

As we arrive in the Netherlands on the 15th of March, we will be about 4-5 weeks in Zeeland. Joy, Micha and Amy will finish their time on the Regenboogschool in Middelburg. Joy will make her final tests and also Micha and Amy will be in their own classes. They stayed connected all these years by email and Skype. But to be there in real life is of course much better and more fun.

During the May holidays, at the end of April we hope to move to Almere-Buiten. Our house here in Kep is empty and bare. We look forward to make a place of our own again, that will grow to be "home".

ALONGSIDERS

Something that really helps during this transition is the knowledge that we stay "missionaries" and that our cooperation with Alongsiders International doesn't end. The 'only' thing that changes is the location and the content of the work.

All five of us are very enthusiastic about the idea of being allowed to start Alongsiders in Europe. We often talk about it and dream about how that will be when also in Europe young people will walk alongside children and love them - very practically - in Jesus name. What is needed to let this happen? It takes a lot of prayer, listening to God, discussing, thinking and praying again. We are amazed (and in a way also not) how the Lord keeps answering. A really cool adventure.

We are often asked to define 'Alongsiders'. There are two main answers to this question:

1. Alongsiders is a worldwide 'movement' of young people and young grown-ups who want to follow the Lord Jesus, being a disciple of Him – and reach out to a younger brother or sister in their environment. The organization (we rather call it a movement) helps with this. We mobilize and equip Christian youth to walk in discipleship. Next to this we also organize events where we meet each other and celebrate

together and share about what the Lord does in our lives.

Our dream for Alongsiders Europe is

Every church engaged
Every youth equipped
Every child welcomes

We walk alongside those who walk alone.

From this point of view Alongsiders is the collective that includes everyone within the movement who helps to make this movement grow, deepen and develop further on.

2. An Alongsider is a young Christian that chooses to (with the help of Master Jesus) walk alongside one vulnerable child and to love that child in the name of Jesus. An Alongsider wants to follow the Lord Jesus by words and deeds. Not like in a program but as a way of life. An Alongsider spends time regularly with their younger brother or sister to learn to know them better, to do fun things together, to help them with homework, to encourage them and to work together at challenges that challenge them and support them to learn to know the Lord Jesus better and to follow Him. So others will meet the Lord Jesus too, through them. In this the Alongsider follows the example of God the Father and His Son (1 Cor. 1,3 and 4).

When the Lord Jesus started His work on earth His statement was clear: 'I came to bring good news to the poor.' Jesus showed by His full ministry that He wants to be a Savior for every human, but He seems to have 'a preference' for the poor, the oppressed, the vulnerable, the ones who are trapped. And when you look at it from this side we all can become Alongsiders. Alongsiders Europe targets specifically on young people but the vision is valid for everyone.

Take a look at our website at www.alongsiderseurope.org, enlist to receive the newsletter. We will keep you updated.

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OUR FAMILY

We as a family are doing well. We enjoy each other. School has been completed and last week all three our kids came to show us proudly their report. They did very well and can proceed joyfully in the Netherlands. We are proud of Jessica and extremely grateful for her effort and support. Honestly, we wouldn't have known how to pass this year without her. Also Jessica is in transition and looks forward to return to the Netherlands after being here over a year.

Amongst all the children of the neighborhood our neighbor Diwiet (12) has a special place in our heart. He was with us almost every day over the past years. Playing together with our children, quarreling together and making up again, all in Khmer of course. We will miss each other! Pray that he will stay in touch with local believers, especially now he enters his teenage years.

'Our' story to and in Cambodia goes parallel a bit with the story of our friends - the family Bos. We know them from a 'Vast & Zeker' youth camps in Laag Soeren, the Netherlands.

Some years before we moved to Cambodia as a family at the start of 2011 - Talitha and I visited them, simply like friends, drinking coffee together and sharing about how the Lord worked in our lives.

Very precious moments. Looking back, this visit was a kind of catalyst in our search to where the Lord wanted us to be as a family. And - something we couldn't imagine back then - it became Cambodia as well.



And now, at the start of 2020 we could visit the family Bos again. A special visit for sure!

In February they finished the translation of the New Testament from the Bible in Kuy and dedicated this translation to the population and to the Lord God. Really special, impressive and precious to be present at this.



We met, next to a multitude of guests from diverse countries, some of the people from the village who we met first in 2011. Among them was one of the local translators. And this time we could talk with her in Khmer! Sharing together and encouraging one another. We celebrated together that her people can read the New Testament and listen

to it in the language of their own heart now.

We see it as the kindness of our Lord that - in a way - our journey in Cambodia started with our friends and that the journey now, just before we go back to the Netherlands, passes this Kuy village again.

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Pray with us, that the seed that was (and is) sown in this beautiful yet complex country may bring forth rich fruit to the glory of God.

That more and more Cambodians will meet the Lord Jesus, learn to know Him and follow Him.

And that the church of Christ in this country will grow and be strong.

It is really cool to know that when we are in heaven we will meet a lot of our Cambodian friends again and we ask you to pray with us that this amount will grow on!

That one day will stand before the throne together and be amazed about who the Lord Jesus really is and what He did. All the glory and honor are to Him! Now and forever.

THANK WITH US:

1. For the seasons in our live in which the Lord God molds us, with the purpose that we will look like the Lord Jesus more and more, to make Him visible to other people.
2. For Shalom Valley and how this place is a blessing to many people in Cambodia and outside of it.
3. That we could transfer our activities in this place into capable local hands.
4. That the Lord supplied every time again in what was necessary to live and work here.

5. For open doors to take the Alongsiders model to the Netherlands/Europe and for the beautiful contacts that come to existence.
6. That Jessica van Assche will work part-time with us within Alongsiders Europe.
7. For the support from Alongsiders International and from you as our prayer partners in this process of transition.

PRAY WITH US:

1. For our last days in Kep, that we can complete this period well and receive strength in saying goodbye.
2. For our local friends when a new season starts also for them. Pray that they will stay close to the Lord Jesus and that seeds that are planted/will be planted in their hearts will germinate.
3. For Diwiet (see newsletter).
4. For wisdom in all the developments that still go on at Shalom Valley (developments of the sports fields, building the bungalows, etc.)
5. For a strong team at Shalom Valley that will radiate peace and pass it on.
6. For blessings and wisdom for Phearom a.o. in contacts with the authorities.
7. For more collaborators for the kids club/Bible study and for the relationship with the local church.
8. For Pon and Srey An who expect their first child at the end of this month.
9. For Jessica when she will (for the time being) settle in Rotterdam. For good encounters with family and friends. For a part-time job as a speech therapist.
10. For us as a family when we prepare ourselves for a new season in Almere.
11. For enough financial support to do our work and live in the Netherlands.
12. For the children as they have to say goodbye to the Regenboogschool in Middelburg.
13. For wisdom and insight as we work out the vision for Alongsiders Europe more. For the right people in the right time.

We hope to meet you all one day. Until next time!

Warm greetings from us from Kep,

Mart-Jan & Talitha,
Joy, Micha and Amy

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We're very grateful for those who want to support us financially.

If you want to do so, please use the Dutch bank details as stated below:

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