

Happy New Year

Greetings, All

So glad to know that if my NY resolutions don't get underway, I'll have three more chances in quick order -- Jan. 25, Chinese New Year, and April 14, Khmer NY. Lots of free fireworks displays for us to enjoy from our back porch too.

Had some lovely Christmas get-togethers with Family from lots of different people groups: Khmer, Filipino, Malaysian, Nagaland, Dutch, Swiss German, Swiss French, British, Chinese, Korean, and US. As JD likes to say, the Church is the REAL United Nations.

JD has been a little skittish about public teaching since his stroke, but this past Sunday he taught at our favorite Tampuan church about an hour's drive away. Most of the road there is now paved, with only the last few miles being iffy. We probably still couldn't go there during rainy season. So much of the ancestral land has been sold to Khmer lowlanders who have planted rubber plantations and cashew groves that we could hardly recognize the landmarks. And so many of the young people have left the village to go study in the city that their parents are struggling to manage the agricultural jobs that the whole family used to handle. Guess that's the price of progress. New wealth brings new trials and temptations too.

One of the village girls who has moved here to Ban Lung is Yet, who's been like a daughter to us for years. She never really had a formal education, but she's learned to read and write in 3 languages. (I think she might be a little smart.) And on her own, she's translated hymns from the Jarai language into her own language, Tampuan, as well as writing many original songs based on the scriptures. For the past year, she's been acting as the dorm mother at the Christian hostel for minority students just up the road from us. Since she's living so close, I have her come once a week to read the Bible and pray with me, and then she stays for lunch. We're making our way slowly through 1 Peter, with her reading the Tampuan scriptures and then my reading the Khmer Bible, comparing and discussing. It's good culture and language study time for me (though at this age, I don't suppose I'll actually learn to speak Tampuan). Yesterday I learned that the Tampuan term for being sprinkled with Jesus's blood comes from the custom the unbelievers have of sprinkling animal's blood on their feet after having encountered something considered cursed. The Tampuans understand this to mean that Christ's blood removes our curse. Good thought.

As an aside -- please pray for Yet and other believing young people, that God would provide believing husbands/wives for them. Yet is on the verge of being too old to be marriageable, (I think she's 31) and it's a severe trial to her to consider that she may never be married if she persists in refusing to marry an unbeliever. For a woman to remain single in this society is just not done, unless there's something obviously wrong with the woman. Please pray for Yet to be joyfully content with God's will for her. And pray that if God wills, He will provide a godly, mature husband for her -- even at her advanced age!

And pray for JD and me as we try to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works -- encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." God brings us opportunities every day -- in our home and outside, with Khmer, minority people, and even expats -- to put these verses into practice.

We so appreciate your prayers and the offerings you give to help us stay here. Never have we been more grateful for our "team" than in these past few months. Please let us know how we can pray for you as well.

In this together,
Kim for both of us