



THE M^CCANN

MISSIONARY JOURNEY

May 2011

Dear Friends,

This is the last newsletter we are writing from Cambodia for the next year, with less than 3 weeks until we fly to the UK. We are busy packing, sorting and saying goodbyes. As we reflect on our first term, overall we feel positive that we have made a difference in some people's lives, we have grown and changed, and that we have achieved the most important aims for our first term here – specifically to have learnt language and culture, and how to live successfully here. We are pleased to let you know that Alex passed his Phase 3 language exam this week.

Family & Home life

Elizabeth has had some illnesses recently. The most concerning problem is recurrent mouth ulcers, which are often disrupting sleep. The main cause in children is stress. We feel that she is coping well on the surface, but the underlying tensions of packing, and moving back to the UK for a year are coming out in these ulcers. She seems very excited about all the things she will be able to do in the UK, and very happy with the bedroom Brian (Marguerite's Dad) has decorated specially for her. The reality of all she is leaving behind – friends, possessions, school, climate, food etc, may not hit fully until she is back in the UK.

Marguerite's pregnancy is progressing well. There are no major problems. She is very much looking forward to the cool of the UK, 38-39°C everyday at the moment, is a lot to cope with.

Church and groups

We resumed the Bible study for a few months, only to hit another issue just a few weeks ago. With only around 4 weeks of study left before we had to finish, we decided as a group that we would stop rather than cause bad feeling between neighbours and brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been encouraging Somnang and Dane to have a daily family devotion time in the evening, since they all now live in the same house. Somnang and his father are getting on well, and Beau has been coming regularly to church

again. Somnang aims to finish Bible college, and seek God's will for his future.

Alex recently preached in Khmer at our church, and again managed almost all of it without using his notes. Our last weekend here in Cambodia is our church retreat, which we are looking forward to as a special time to end our 2.5 years of worshipping with this congregation.

The Kid's Bible club came to a natural end a while ago. Six children had moved out of the street within 2 months or each other, five of whom came every week. Kunthea continues to study English every weekday evening, and her brother has started studying English at this time. This left just one family of irregular attendees. After several weeks of planning a group, only to have no-one show up we felt it was time to stop. The group was started in response to the many children in our street, playing in our house regularly, and wanting to give them spiritual input. With no children even coming round to play regularly, it seemed right to end the group. Grace, our co-leader, is regularly meeting one of the women in the street to read the Bible with her.

Ministry

Marguerite finished a few weeks ago at the orphanage. Alex's TEEAC group has finished. We are thankful to God that most of the ministry we have been involved in has come to a natural end, and we haven't had to worry about handing much over, or whether things will be able to continue without us.

Future Plans

Since our last newsletter we have been to Siem Reap to visit the family working up there with students, to see their ministry. We returned very excited about the work there. We feel that it is a very good fit for Alex, and for us as a family. We got on well with the family, who have 3 children. Elizabeth particularly enjoyed playing with their 3 year old daughter. We were also able to visit the new branch of Hope International School while we were there, which is the school Elizabeth attends in Phnom Penh. It only started in September last year, so is still rather small. This means a current student staff ratio of 1:7. and so Elizabeth would get a lot of individual attention if that is where we end up.

Home Assignment

We are pleased to have lots of dates for speaking at various groups and churches in June and July. We are not taking bookings in August due to the baby's arrival. But we still have lots of space in our diary from September onwards that we are hoping to fill. We hope

Prayer Pointers

- Thank God for the many ways He has shown His care for us in preparing for Home Assignment over the last few months.
- Pray for us as we say goodbyes, travel back to the UK, and settle in. Particularly for Elizabeth with all the major changes in her life.
- Pray for our health, Marguerite and the baby, and also Elizabeth with her recurring mouth ulcers.
- Pray that we will be diligent and faithful in our roles during home assignment, and that God will lead us in His ways.

Thank you for your continued prayers for us,
Alex, Marguerite & Elizabeth

that we will be able to build on the relationship we have with you, our supporters, both those of you we know well, and those of you we don't know so well.

Life in Phnom Penh

As we are thinking about, and planning for our return, we are reflecting on the many differences between life here and life in the UK. Alex's biggest frustrations are the standard of driving, and problems with plumbing. Marguerite hates the dust and the insects – mosquitoes, ants and flies. We both hate the noise pollution, particularly during the wedding season, when very loud music or speeches are broadcast for the whole community to 'enjoy', along with the wedding guests. But of course there are many things we love about living here. These include, the friendliness and openness of people and their willingness to help, the sense of community, the ease of getting repairs, and the speed of workmen coming to the house, and the spontaneity of the culture.

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