My first feelings from Cambodia

I’m sitting on my balcony, my favorite place.
It’s 5 am. The early morning light will soon be lighting up the sky behind the Phnom Penh skyline . All is quiet on the normally busy streets. Except the roosters are crowing.

Eight stories below the Cafe owner has his fire going in a handmade grill that is sitting in the street so he can start cooking the meat for the day’s customers. The meat sits out all day in the heat! (We don’t eat there) The shop keeper next to him just rolled up his door to prepare for the day’s business.

There is a warm breeze blowing and I’m talking to my five little pots I planted, encouraging them to sprout and grow!!

I can hear the daily morning ritual chanting of the monks. And can vision the families in the red and blue rooftops houses below preparing for the day.

The uniformed children go to school 6 days a week. But when we walked to see the Temple site, very early on our first Sunday morning here, the students at Royal University were going to class. ???
This is a country of contradictions!!!

Many people working very hard trying to provide for their families with their food stands selling fruits, vegetables, fried bananas, guavas. Logangs, dragonfruit, big bunches of bananas, fresh sugar cane juice, fresh squeezed orange juice, corn on the cob, bowls of rice noodles topped with curry made with meat and chicken and pig blood or a green soup made from fish topped with bean sprouts, cabbage, lotus stems, sesbania blossoms, cucumber veggies, shredded banana blossoms etc….

Thousands of shops line the streets selling food, fish, plastic containers, helmets, tires and accessories for the Many motor scooters (motos) that most people ride. There are people sweeping the streets with a broom, driving tuk tuks (local taxi, an open air cart hooked to a moto or motorcycle), And our construction workers– from laborers dipping rain water out of a trench with a plastic water bottle, more skilled workers tying rebar and testing the concrete to the skilled engineers and architect designers sitting behind computers in air conditioned offices across the street.. There are beautiful skyscrapers and luxury cars and the biggest fanciest 4 story mall I've ever seen with stores like Nike, Pandora, Tommy Hilfiger, Krispy Kreme, Cold Stone, electronic stores of every kind. Even a huge movie theater with an IMAX screen !!! Unskilled workers might make $7- 12 a day. You can buy "almost" anything here for a price. American things are very expensive!!

We go to the Temple site where the work goes on despite the every day rain storms that turn the clay soil to mud! Yesterday I watched as the concrete truck came and waits while they test every batch that arrives. They measure the temperature and pack it into a mold and release it to test and measure the Slump If it's too wet or dry it is rejected and they wait for another load. After it passes the test it is poured into the bucket of the big backhoe and taken (because it's too muddy for the cement truck to get close enough) to where it is needed to pour the pile caps. And workers dip buckets into the backhoe bucket and carry the concrete by hand to pour in the proper places !!!

The work in the Mission also keeps us very busy. Our first day we attended Zone Conference for 3 zones and helped serve lunch to the missionaries. The first weekend we attended Baptisms for 3 people where we met Jarom Jones, one of our grandson, Jared's missionary companions in Tacoma, Washington. We attended the Farewell Testimonial for 4 departing Missionaries

at the President’s Office. And last Thursday attended a meeting for all the Senior Couples with President Neang. (6 couples- 3 by Zoom who serve in the Northern Provinces up by Angkor Wat and Siem Reap). He explained his vision for the Young Missionaries And asked for our help. (Previously all the Senior couples have been attending the International English Speaking Branch, which we attended once our first Sunday here).

President asked us:
*to attend Zone Conferences
*help with house inspections of Missionary apartments, (which we have already done once
*do random checks to see if the missionaries are up on time and especially home on time, because of safety. If they are not in on time they have to meet with Presiden Neang, the first offense and the 2nd time they are sent home!!!
*take them out to eat
*Be available for Emergency medical help, especially after hours
*Participate in all their Baptisms and take the refreshments.
*Our assignment is the Phnom Penh North Stake (5 wards and 1 branch) to contact the Stake President to see where he wants us to attend
and help.

So we’re figuring out what we can do and still do our Primary assignment on the Temple site!!
On Monday, President Neang asked us to present a training at the Zone Leaders Training in his office (~20-30 zone leaders, STLs and AP,s) They have this every transfer, It was on “Be Amazing Like the Amazing Message You Teach !!!” Ken is doing wonderfully and I’m being stretched to the max!!!
Yesterday, Sister Davis messaged us to tell us thank you for our messages and invited us to join their new district for District Lunch at Mikes Burger House. She said we wouldn’t get sick. We walked from the Temple site, quite the adventure,

dodging the moto and tuk tuk traffic!!! So Fun to be with the young Elders and Sister Missionaries.

We blessed the food, ate hamburgers and Didn't get sick !!!
It's taken me 3 days to finish this email and my pots have sprouted with little green lettuce plants and thai basil, chives, can't remember what else except the bean seeds given to me by grandpa Rebarckik (Thank you Len) are 2 inches high after only 4 days since planting !!!

Cambodia is an Amazing experience !!!!

So Grateful to be here (most days)

So Grateful for my tiny washing machine and drying rack!!

So Grateful for clean water !!

Wanting to be grateful for my oven- I've burned everything so far ☹

So Grateful for air conditioning!! It is Soo hot and humid!

So Grateful for my balcony refuge place in the early morning!

So Grateful for the examples of these Faithful people and their sacrifice to live the gospel of Jesus Christ

So Grateful they are getting a Temple!!!

So Grateful for these Young Missionaries !

So Grateful for my Patient companion!!

So Grateful for Temples and to be a small part of this one!

So Grateful for Family and Friends!!!
So Grateful for to a loving Heavenly Father that listens to our pleas for Help and protection!

So Grateful for Jesus Christ !!!!

Sister Merry Jones























