

Dear Family and Friends,

No, we did not fall off the globe! Can I blame this late letter on a naughty computer? I'm writing this on Yuko's Mac with her assistance.

The picture you are viewing was one of those Christmas \$10 specials. What was it P.T. Barnum said was born every minute? Well, after we saw all those nice pictures we managed to get out of the place with what was almost another mortgage payment. This is one of the images, and to tell the truth I think the financial fiasco was worth it.



Today is Corey's birthday. He woke up this morning laughing. Caleb's first words were: "Daddy, could you give me my water bottle, please?" Usually he adds the "please" with coaxing, but he didn't need any encouragement today.

So how are you? We are doing fine. Corey is taking an antibiotic. It is the only thing in his life of which he is not enthused. Caleb is going to school a half a day five times a week at a price we can afford. On Saturdays several Japanese children come to our home for playtime. On Tuesdays their moms come for fellowship and prayer. Did I mention that Corey stood for ten seconds today and took two steps?

Well, there is more going on here than just the Wilkins Clan. Let me share with you about the work. I am so delighted with what is going on. Let me just tell you of a few things that happened this month.

The word that comes to mind is *Empowerment*. Our Development Committee is encouraging our childcare staff and churches to start development projects to offset expenses at the facilities and to help generate funds to pay the church pastors. The Christian Education Committee has also been busy. This week we have a three day

seminar to train twenty-seven young people to teach Sunday school. The Evangelism Committee hasn't been sitting around either. Last month was the first time they received a monthly allowance. It is our first local committee to receive funding from the Mission. This month it has been training twenty-five youth to share their faith with others. The first week in October we will go to Poom Dohng for our first group outing. The name means Coconut Village but the place has no coconuts. Let's pray we find faith.

One other interesting development came to my ears this month. At least seven of our scholarship program graduates have come up with their own support group and assistance fund. They will each give \$5 a month to help our pastors or churches. This was their idea.

Lastly, on this theme of empowerment, the Phnom Penh church will have about \$200 in offerings this month. This is not from foreign believers, but our own church family. It is wonderful to see the seeds of self support and indigenous ministry starting to sprout.

I'm working with the committees to help them draw up their purpose, job descriptions, and some policy. Each committee will submit these to the BOA before our next annual conference.

I am on the schedule to preach at the Phnom Penh church twice a month. I told the congregation last week that I'll not use the services of a translator in the future when I preach. On Wednesday evening I preach but only a fifteen minute spot; Sunday morning will require somewhat more preparation. It is excellent practice, however, and it is helping me absorb the grammar.

Yuko and Christine have come up with a couple of new products for the development group. Some of you may remember the name Ming Charoup. She was our chief seamstress in Kampong Cham. She'd like to continue working with us. We hope to bring her a sewing machine and some material early next month.

Yuko is also doing the finances for the US Mission and the Asian Pacific Free Methodist Mission Association. She recently has been able to put Quicken accounting software on the computer. It has been very helpful in keeping the books in order.

On a more personal side, I was coming out of our Mission office last week and heard a dog barking. I turned to see a young man of about thirty years picking through garbage

for recyclables. As I had some water bottles in the van, I grabbed them and a Gospel tract. He was very grateful but waved off receiving the tract. I believe he could not read. In addition to probably never having an opportunity for an education, he seemed a little cognitively challenged. I offered him a “Jesus loves you,” and he was off to his next stop. He had a cigarette butt in his mouth that was smoked all the way down to the filter, but I didn’t see any bag of glue. I thank the Lord for that. I am both blessed and appalled at how rich I am. May the Lord have mercy on folks from both sides of the tracks.

Tonight Caleb was having difficulty with something; actually, he was in pain. I prayed with him, and he said: “Mou itai nain desu (there isn’t any pain).” I in turn said: “Thank you, Jesus.” Caleb then asked: “Why do you say: ‘Thank you, Jesus?’” I said: “Because we asked Him to help us, and He did. Jesus always helps us when we pray.” At this point he just turned to me with a thoughtful look and said: “Oooh!” It was our first theological encounter. We hope your prayers are bringing some needed answers for you.

We sure miss all our friends. We look forward to enjoying your company in the future. The Lord bless you in your labors with Him.

Love, CYCYCY (Chris, Yuko, Caleb Yuta, Corey Yuki)

Ps. We can’t send this letter from our house because our phone line is so slow. I have to take the computer to the internet shop. As a result I wrote this a month ago and haven’t gotten to the shop for some time. As for Poom Dohng, twenty of the team went. I took almost everyone in a truck borrowed from fellow team member, Davis Lam. We had a grand time. I hung out at a pool hall for a while. It only had one table. I chatted with the young people and the homeowner’s widowed mother. Our evangelism group broke into several teams. I kept roaming from team to team. One of the village girls went with one of the teams. I was interested to hear her approach to evangelism. She went immediately to the issue of sin. This being Asia, I was surprised by her directness.

This past week the Lord provided another great encounter. I went to a coffee shop to practice my sermon away from the din of the planes, trains, and automobiles that frequent my living room. Several men from the Water Department stopped in, also. I don’t even

remember how we got started, but one gentleman said something about Christianity. I told him I was brushing up on my message for Sunday. He asked me the difference between Christianity and Buddhism--the #1 dream question for anyone wanting to share their hope. We talked for half an hour while the other men departed. I gave him my Khmer/English Bible and off he went. I still have a sermon to master, but I'm not unhappy with the way events unfolded.

As I hear the news lately it sounds like everyone is challenged by economic difficulties. Maybe this is our opportunity to set our affections on things above where moth and rust do not corrupt. In any event, we pray the Lord hold you in the hollow of His hand until we meet again.

Ebenezer,

CYCYCY