

Head over to [our photoblog](#) to see how 1) J.P. [observed a training session](#), 2) [our dog, Coco](#), arrived from Vietnam, 3) the girls [started school](#), 4) we ate some [strange food](#), 5) we [bought a motorbike](#), 6) J.P. [got licensed](#), 7) Bella [celebrated a birthday](#) and started [learning badminton](#), and 8) Isaac discovered that [Krispy Kreme](#) is available in Phnom Penh.



# SQUARE TWO

## THE CIMA FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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**Prayers:** for the girls as they struggle to adjust to a new school; for making new friends for our family; for J.P.'s upcoming trip to encourage provincial pastors on Sept. 11; for regional LCMS meetings in Taiwan Sept. 17-21; for productive language study; for J.P.'s dad and grandmother and Aimee's mom as they battle cancer.

**Wanna help us impact the people of Cambodia? We need your help!** Give online [here](#), or mail a check to P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 (checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, memo: Cima family-Cambodia).

# តើអ្នកអាចនិយាយភាសាខ្មែរបានទេ?

“Do you speak Khmer?” No. In fact, we can’t actually read the very question above! We confess that the the adjustment to a new language has been one of the hardest parts of the transition to Cambodia. The shift back to total language inability has been jarring. Gone are the days when we could confidently talk with anyone on the street in Vietnamese. Now we must either remain silent or use Google Translate (which didn’t exist when we moved to Vietnam in 2007!). Gone are the days when we were the experts whom others came to for help. Now we must ask for help from English speaking Khmer friends (mercifully, there are many). Gone are the days of blissful independence. Now we are totally dependent for even menial tasks.

*But maybe all this is good in these early days in Cambodia.* It is humbling to be incapable and dependent, but that is an important reminder of our total dependency on Christ’s immense capability to carry out his mission. It is frustrating not to be the expert, but not knowing leads us to ask others, providing opportunities to build relationships with them and build them up in their expertise.

Nonetheless, we have started learning Khmer. The girls learn three days a week at their school. J.P. will study 2-3 days per week at a language school with a private tutor. He was thrilled to find out that his teacher, Ms. Sona (pictured above), is also a Christian! Aimee will wait until Isaac is a bit older before engaging in formal study, but she already impresses with the language she’s picked up informally. One day, God willing, we might even be able to read that sentence above!



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Embracing not being the experts happily requires us to look, listen and learn. Last week, J.P. was invited by another missionary to [cycle 30km \(each way\) to South Phnom Prasit Pagoda](#). J.P. was able to observe Cambodian spirituality, which is more influenced by Buddhism compared to Vietnam. Pagodas dot the landscape wherever one travels. But similar to Vietnam, Buddhism is incorporated into an animistic (i.e. spirit-worship) framework. J.P. saw this first hand at his neighbor’s house this past month during the [Ghost Festival](#).

# Looking, Listening, and Learning