

Blessed to be a Blessing

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The Navigator Ministries, Inc.

The First Year: Settling-In and Connecting

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Galatians 3:14

Last August, **Ammi Lopez** and **Zeny Villena** marked their first year in Cambodia as the Philippine Navigators-sent field workers.

Ammi and Zeny, for the past 12 months, have put their efforts in learning about Khmer culture, history, traditions and integrating into the society, and daily life. Both women have done survival Khmer language acquisition. Khmer history, social customs, Buddhism, the country's economic, social, and political realities and social challenges have been the center of their observations

and readings on the Khmer culture and life. In their outings both have been afforded exposures to the Khmer way of life.

Through the kind invitations of their Khmer friends and students Ammi and Zeny have had the opportunities to be with Khmer families on occasions like a wedding, a birthday bash, and Buddhist holiday celebrations— Water Festival and Pchum ben.

Integrating into the mainstream society and participating fully in the day-to-day flow of the local life have also been part of their first-year agenda.

Through their English teaching responsibilities, both have had the opportunities to interact meaningfully with Cambodian students and professionals. Friendships have come to fruition through these interactions. Such relationships have become the channels by which the



Zeny Villena and Ammi Lopez

blessings of the Gospel have started to flow through to other lives.

Meet some of their new-found friends in Cambodia:

Bora, Kosal, Sinath and Rina were Ammi and Zeny's students at a local NGO-run language school in Phnom Penh. It was a real encouragement for our two field workers when these students from Conversations with Foreigners (CWF) honored the teachers with a simple group get-together at one of Phnom Penh's affordable restaurant. Through the passing months these students have indeed become dear friends.

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Left to right: Bora, Kosal, Sinath, Ammi, Rina, and Zeny during a treat by the students for their teachers at Bali Café.

Being in a family

**"GOD SETS
THE LONELY
IN FAMILIES..."
Ps. 68:6A**

Mony is a housewife who works as a researcher at the Ministry of Health of Cambodia. She and her husband has a young daughter, Danet who was at Zeny's class at CWF. It was while Mony was waiting for Danet to finish her class that Mony got to meet Ammi at the school lounge. Through the evening exchanges in the lobby,

friendship grew between Ammi and Mony. Soon Ammi and Zeny were invited to Mony's family celebrations like a wedding, a birthday bash and Khmer holiday celebrations—Water Festival and Pchum Ben. Being part of Mony's family gatherings on ordinary days and special occasions has always been heart-warming experiences for Ammi and Zeny.



Mony (second from the left) has taken in Ammi and Zeny into her family's social life. The two ladies flanked Mony and the newly-weds.

Serving together

**"HE WHO IS
KIND TO THE
POOR LENDS TO
THE LORD, AND
HE WILL
REWARD HIM
FOR WHAT HE
HAS DONE."
Prov. 19:17**

Ravy, Vanna and **Samnang** were amongst Ammi and Zeny's very first contacts when they arrived in the country last August 2006. Ammi found the group on the internet. They were looking for volunteer English teachers for their

newly-established language school and Ammi and Zeny signed up as English mentors.

Friendship blossomed between the group and the two field workers. In school they all served the poor Cambodian students by giving them English lessons at affordable fees. On some days they are off from their teaching chores, they bonded by spending time together.



Left to right: Ravy, Vanna, Ravy's sister (standing), Ammi, Zeny, and Samnang.

Fostering friendship

Zeny got acquainted with **Bora, Sordanin, Rina, Sinath,** and **Sovannarah** last year. They were in her English class. For two terms of English modules the students learned with Zeny. What began as a teacher-student relationship at the onset of the classes progressed to closer ties by the end of the term.

Ammi came to know **Sopour** through

her mother, **Pov**. Ammi started to establish friendship with mother and daughter in Sept. 2006 by frequenting their hairdresser shop. In March 2007 Ammi offered to give Sopour and her best friend, **Thaveka**, free English lessons. In May the group started to have Bible study at Sopour's residence.



Getting reacquainted with our Khmer friends from years back:

Kimtha, Rath, Nory, Mithona, Thida, Tekho and all our others Khmer friends

When Zeny first stayed in Cambodia in 2002-2003, she made friends with a few Khmer students. When she came back to the country after a three - year absence, Zeny reconnected with them. The students are now all working and some have already transitioned to married lives. The group today continues to meet for mutual building up and spiritual formations albeit only on holidays and sometimes on weekends.

Some new faces were added to the fellowship. They are Ammi and Zeny’s new-found friends from among their students, work colleagues and friends of their friends.

When Jong and Tess Vital visited Cambodia, the group gathered for fun, fellowship and some relevant inputs on values from the guests.



Kim, Rath, Kimtha, Jun, and-Teckho. Below: Zeny, Mithona, Theavy, Thida, and Nory



Transitioning to a life of togetherness

IN CAMBODIA, THE PARENTS ARE THE ONES WHO LOOK FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S LIFE PARTNER. TO ACCEPT THE PARENTS’ CHOICE IS TO HONOR THEM.

Ban Hy and Theavy’s love story is out of the mold in a culture where the parents are responsible for looking for a suitable life partner for

their son or daughter. They first met in Zeny’s English class five years ago. Back then, Hy was already smitten with Theavy’s charm and ways. However, he only made known his intention to her five years after— that is after he had finished college and gotten himself a job.

In December the couple will wed. Zeny is honored to be part of the celebration as one of the couple’s family members for the bride considers Zeny like a second mom.



Ban Hy and Ket Sokuntheavy

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" We envision loving communities living out and proclaiming the Gospel of God's Kingdom, leading to the transformation of hearts and lives, families and nations, from one generation to another. "

Thanking you...

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your part in this work among our friends in Cambodia. You have shared your lives with them through your prayers and sacrificial giving.

We are assured of your hearts being with the Khmers because this is one of the works where you invest your treasures. That is truly heartwarming.

The Philippine Navigators - sent workers in Cambodia continue to seek your partnership through the coming months and years ahead. We are blessed that you are part of this team that reaches out to the Cambodians. May the Lord grant us harvests among the Khmers to His glory.

For the Cambodia Team,

Zeny with Ammi

Praying for the workers

I John 1:1-4.

Please focus your thoughts on these verses as you think of what to pray for Ammi and Zeny. May the Holy Spirit lead you in your intercession for the Cambodia Team.



Zeny and Ammi

Verse 1

"That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked at,
and our hands have touched--- this we proclaim to you concerning the Word of Life

Verse 2

The life appeared;
we have seen it and testify to it
and we proclaim to you the eternal life,

which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

Verse 3

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us.
And our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Verse 4

We write this to make our joy complete.