



The Farmers



on Mission in
Cambodia



SolidJoys@gmail.com

www.SolidJoys.org

864 • 979 • 4773

Summer, 2010

Summer at SIL-UND

From what they tell me, perhaps the two biggest hurdles a missionary faces are language and culture. My conversations with several veteran missionaries and some reading on cross-cultural communication had convinced me that this was true. So, Bonnie Ruth and I spent the bulk of our summer taking a full load of courses at the [Summer Institute of Linguistics](#) (the academic arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators) at the [University of North Dakota](#), seeking to acquire tools that will empower us to successfully negotiate these obstacles. Many of you were praying for us—thank you sincerely for laboring with us in our work for the Lord. The summer was indeed strenuous—due to the combination of academic and family responsibilities—but your prayers were also effective, in at least the following ways: (1) Bonnie Ruth and I feel that our courses will prove invaluable in our long-term ministry in Cambodia. (2) Our girls had a great time meeting new friends and participating in fun activities; IOW, the summer was a “positive” experience from their perspective. (3) Spiritually, I think the Lord *began* to teach me a number of lessons, first about myself, and ultimately about himself, that I suspect I’ll be a long time in learning—about himself as the Good Shepherd and about me as the sheep that must learn to trust and follow. So, thank you again for your participation in our mission to the Lao. May the Lord richly bless you for your labor of love.

For those interested, here’s a summary of what we learned in each class (for those less interested in such tedium, please skip to page 2):

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): SLA was the class with the most obvious and immediate relevance to our work in Cambodia. In broad terms, this course did two things for me: (1) It gave me empirical evidence—study after study—that when God confused the languages, He did a good job. I only *thought* I realized the difficulty involved in gaining near-native proficiency in a language. Thus, part of what I learned here could actually be quite discouraging if not taken in context. That leads me to (2): It gave me tools for overcoming the “wall of noise” that is Khmer or Laotian. It demonstrated to me that language and culture are *not* separate entities, both of which a good missionary must study and master; rather, they are inseparably interwoven to form a “languacultural world” into which I must be “nurtured.” SLA course gave us a philosophy and detailed plan of action which we are chomping at the bit to implement.

Articulatory Phonetics: Every language consists of a certain set of sounds that a competent speaker of that language must be able to hear and produce. Learning to do this with a foreign language can be overwhelming if you’re not aware of the range of possibilities. That’s what phonetics class was all about. So, here we learned how to hear and pronounce all kinds of sounds that were strange and difficult for our poor little monolingual ears and tongues (and lips, and palates, and velums, and uvulas, and pharynxes, and epiglottises, and glottises)! Now we’re eager to discover and begin tackling the phonetic obstacles of Khmer and Lao.

Introduction to Sociolinguistics: We probably had the most fun in this course, in part because we both find human beings, including ourselves, to be very



The Farmers



on Mission in
Cambodia



SolidJoys@gmail.com

www.SolidJoys.org

864 • 979 • 4773

Summer, 2010

humorous creatures, partly because they can take themselves so seriously at times (Bonnie Ruth compared us humans to the Dufflepuds in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*). Sociolinguistics studies how language influences and is influenced by a whole range of factors, including ethnicity, race, status, and gender. So, we spent our time discussing life-and-death issues such as, Is it *pop*, *soda*, or *coke*? And do Eskimos really have 20 words for snow?

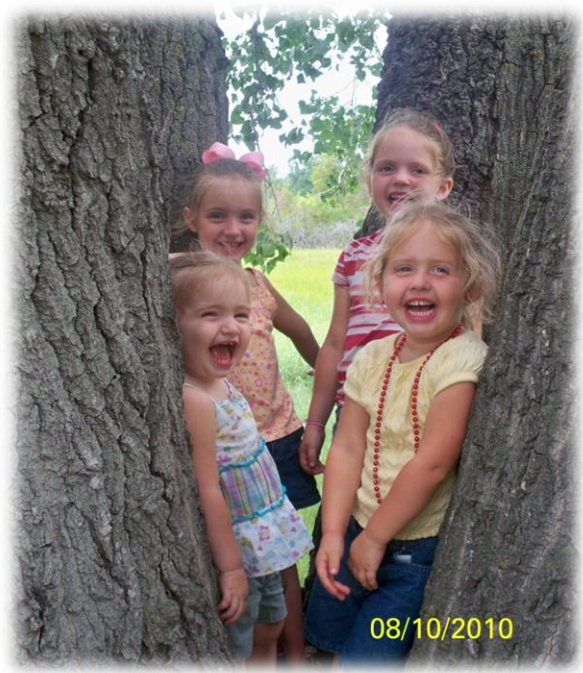
Ethnographic Methods: Next to SLA, I think this course will prove to have the most long-term significance for our work in Cambodia. Here I was exposed to a broad ranges of topics that the cross-cultural communicator must understand if he is to be successful: issues such as a society's view of the relationship between the group and the individual, or the dangers of both an ethnocentric chauvinism and a postmodern relativism and the way in which a biblical worldview enables one to avoid both errors. I also gained exposure to basic methodology in acquainting myself with the cultural norms of a of a particular society.

Looking Ahead

Now that SIL is finished, we've returned to a full fall/winter schedule of meetings with churches. Right now we're in Savage, MN with our friends at Eden Baptist. Next week, we'll return to our home in Wisconsin for the first time in nearly a year. We're very excited to see old friends and to enjoy the northern WI fall weather. Please keep in touch. Your emails and Facebook notes are always an encouragement. And thank you again for your commitment to the Lord's work through us.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Jeremy



209 Roberts Rd.
Taylors, SC 29687



www.emuinternational.org

864 • 268 • 9267