



Participants sharing insights after making timelines of their lives

Gathering for Spiritual Formation

On Thursday nights in November and December, I joined with my Resonate colleagues, Gil and Joyce Suh, to facilitate a spiritual formation group with 11 young Christian leaders. Together we became students of God's work in our lives, and we drew closer to Christ as we practiced spiritual disciplines and reflected on biblical stories as well as our own spiritual journeys.

While many leadership development programs already exist in Cambodia, these programs often focus mostly on skills and knowledge. We wanted this group to be different. We wanted to provide a place and a process for everyone in the group to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. We have seen that when leaders fail, it's often not because of a lack of knowledge or skills, but rather because they lack a deep foundation in Christ.

The group members ranged in ages from 21 to 35, with some working full-time in church ministry and others working for organizations such as World Vision. As we shared meals together and dug into our life stories, participants shared about their experiences—both joys and sorrows—and also about the challenges that they face in their lives today. In particular, some of our sessions on pain and disappointment were meaningful as we explored how God uses even our pain as a key element in our formation into the likeness of Christ.

On the last night, one of the participants remarked, "This program was like a mirror that helped me understand my whole life more." We hope to continue to offer opportunities like this for young leaders, and please pray for us as we plan our next step in spiritual formation.

Prayer Points

Help!

- I have about a month left in my course at Phnom Penh Bible School. Teaching in my second language is harder than I imagined, but God's grace has been good to me.
- Pray for peace and justice for Cambodia as we head towards national elections in July. The government dissolved the main opposition party in November.
- My new housemate Bunthan is adjusting to living with us—and we're adjusting to him too. Pray for a smooth transition.

Thanks!

- Give thanks for our experience with the spiritual formation group (left). It was formative not only for the participants but also for the facilitators. Pray for us too as we plan our next stage.
- Resonate held a retreat for Asia staff in South Korea in October, and I was able to take some time off after that retreat as well as at Christmas. Hiking in the cool, fall-colored mountains of Korea was good for my soul.
- I'm amazed at the ways that God continues to provide financially for this ministry.

Pictures of Formation

While formation was the central theme in our recent leadership program (front page), I've also noticed it as a theme in other aspects of my life and ministry. I have seen God at work forming me to be more like Christ and also using my ministry to form others too. Here are a few glimpses from the past couple months.



Housemates

I celebrated my four-year “Cambodia-versary” this month, and definitely the most formative part of the last four years has been living with Cambodian guys. These guys teach me about love, community, forgiveness, and perseverance in the midst of hardship.

We recently welcomed our sixth house member, Bunthan (far right), and we bonded together by going ice skating, my Christmas present to them.

Thank you!

Thank for your ongoing partnership with me in forming young leaders to be more like Christ. My ministry funding received a great boost through year-end giving (23% of my total financial goal came in during December!). Thanks for being part of this work!



Christmas Party with Bible School Students

I've been teaching 14 students about the book of Genesis since the beginning of November. We are learning not only about the facts of the text but also about how we are formed in God's good creation and yet marred by our sin. At Christmas, I invited them to my home to deepen our relationships through games and fellowship over a pizza dinner.



A Visit from Jay Blankespoor

Jay is one of the pastors at Boston Square CRC in Grand Rapids, the church that was very formative for me while I was in seminary. I've learned much from Jay and from all of Boston Square about the church and pastoral ministry, and it was a rich blessing to introduce him to my life here.

អរគុណច្រើន! / Thanks! – Justin

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