

TOM AND DELECIA CAREY

Cambodia

March 2026



Year Two at Hope Vocational School

The new building smell has vanished at HVS, and we are more than half way through with Term One of our second year in operation. That doesn't seem possible to me! Last year, 159 students filled 307 seats in 26 classes taught by five qualified teachers. Some studied with us all three terms; some studied only once. Some took one class each term; others took two.

Every student benefitted, and each one is better prepared now with knowledge, skills, work attitudes, and professional ethics to help them succeed in the labor market or at university. Most importantly, every HVS student had the opportunity to belong to a community that celebrated and cherished their inherent dignity and worth as precious children of God.

In 2025, students attended entirely tuition free thanks to the support of GBGM, Bridge of Hope, and many generous donors. By the end of our first year, we were able to determine that the actual cost of attendance at HVS is about \$210 per class, per term. As a school whose mission is to serve young adults in Cambodia and help them improve their futures, it is important that the students who can benefit from our school also can afford to attend. At the same time, we need to develop ways for the school to be more self-sustaining. A creative combination of tuition and financial aid is our goal.

As a first step, we decided to institute a low tuition and charge students ten percent of the actual cost of attendance (\$21 per class, per term). We established a plan where students could pay \$7 each month, or they could receive a substantial discount by making a one-time payment of \$15 at the beginning of the term. In addition, students pay \$2 each term for materials and \$3 for a required uniform shirt and ID.

Not only is this a small step towards financial independence for HVS, the tuition provides a way for students and their families to feel ownership in the school.



Letters from Asbury

Back in the fall, my dear friend Miriam Kolwe insisted that I give her our mailing address. I told her she would be taking a big chance to try to mail anything to us; we've only received one letter the whole year we've lived here! But if you know Miriam, you know she could not be dissuaded.

In February, the package arrived. Inside the fat envelope were fourteen notes written to us by members of our Sunday School class, the Seekers at Asbury UMC in Lafayette, Louisiana. We took turns reading them aloud to each other and just snuggling in the love and support flowing our way from that special group of friends.

We don't think we would be in Cambodia now if God had not provided us with so many opportunities to grow and strengthen our faith through Sunday School classes like the Seekers in Lafayette and the Discoverers in Natchez. We know they pray for us every week, and we are so thankful.



@CareysinCambodia



fcarey@umcmmission.org



dcarey@umcmmission.org



@CareysinCambodia



Have You Eaten Rice Yet?

In Cambodia when someone greets you, they may ask, “Nham bai howie now?” The direct translation of this phrase is “Have you eaten rice yet?” But what it really means is “How are you?” Asking someone whether they have eaten rice as a friendly greeting shows how central rice is in this culture as well as how important having plenty of food is for a person’s well being, not something Cambodians take for granted. Many people eat rice three times a day here.

Every December on one special day, Hebron Medical Center gives each in-patient and each out-patient a large bag of rice. It is a Christmas gift in a country that doesn’t really celebrate Christmas. And the gift is Hebron’s way of saying, “God loves you, and we love you.” At least on that day, everyone at the hospital can answer, “Nham bai howie” or “I have eaten.”

Hardcore Missionaries from All Over the World!

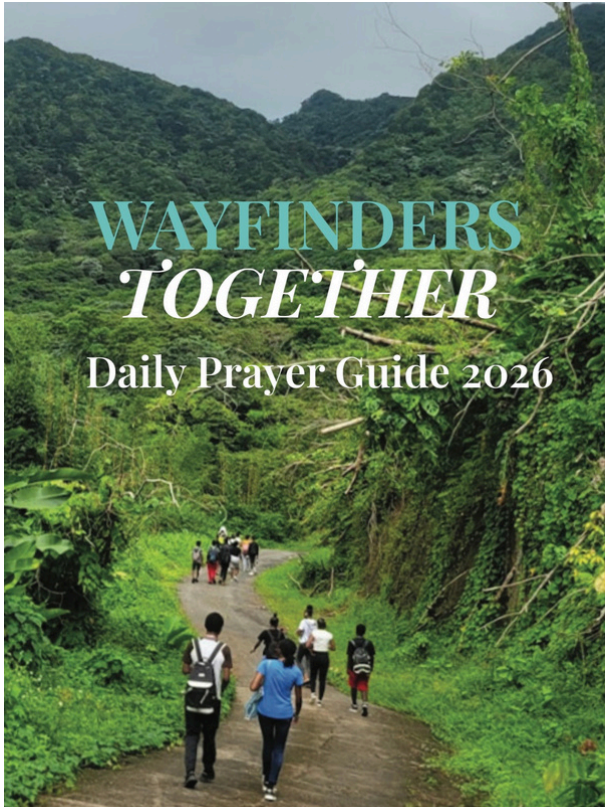
Tom and I sometimes feel like we are “Missionary Lite.” We waited until the end of our careers to say “yes” to God’s call. Here in Cambodia, we are humbled and inspired by the young missionaries who are raising their children in a foreign country while they serve as the hands and feet of Christ.

There are two types of physicians on staff at Hebron Medical Center. Some are Khmer medical graduates employed by the hospital. The first resident Tom worked with, Sokly Bun, fits this model. She stayed on at Hebron as a women’s health attending physician after she finished her residency program there. Other physicians are missionaries like Tom. They work for various mission agencies who partner with Hebron and essentially “loan” missionary doctors to the hospital.

These missionary doctors come from all over the world. They move spouses and children to Cambodia, put down roots, and build lives here. Getting to know them has been one of the great pleasures of our service. Hebron occasionally holds team celebrations, and they always include the missionary families. At the last breakfast, I counted ten children: the oldest was fifteen and the youngest was four.

We know they are having amazing life experiences in Cambodia, but they are also missing out on experiences our kids took for granted like water parks and football games and summer camps. We thank God for these families and their witness and service to the people of Cambodia. We invite you to join us in praying for them and for their ministries: the Helm family, the Oh family, the Kuske family.





Reading the Lectionary

It's a good thing GBGM does not require missionaries to be perfect Christians. When Tom and I were building our careers and growing our family, we demonstrated less than exemplary personal spiritual practices. We made it to Sunday School and Church every week, but there were many weeks when I prayed only while sitting in a pew. I knew daily Bible study mattered. Somewhere in our Louisiana storage unit sits a box full of devotional guides all waiting for me to read past the first few pages.

Cambodia gave us the gift of time to grow closer to God and to each other. Our busy social lives abruptly ended when we stepped on that airplane one year ago, and most of our family and professional obligations evaporated over the Arctic Circle.

We filled the void with something new for us: daily Bible reading, devotion, and prayer. We use *The Lectionary Calendar* from EpiscopalChurch.org, and Tom reads aloud. We research the Saint who is recognized that day if it is someone we don't know. (Episcopal Saints include everyone from the Apostles to Martin Luther King, Jr.) We've learned a lot! We talk about ways the readings are connected and marvel at how many stories from the Bible still feel new to us even though we've both read the whole thing cover-to-cover. We pray together.

In addition to the Episcopal *Lectionary Calendar*, we use *Wayfinders Together*, the daily prayer guide by The United Women in Faith. Until we went to Africa for missionary training and commissioning, we never knew this annually published book exists. It includes weekly pages with two daily lectionary readings, prayers, stories, and missionary birthdays. We love the "pray today" section that features a daily prayer request from projects and partners of United Women in Faith and Global Ministries. Most days, we look up the projects on the internet. The massive reach of this mission organization we work for constantly amazes us.

Even though Tom is a cradle United Methodist and I've been a United Methodist for more than thirty years, we had no idea how much our denomination does for people all over the United States and the World until we started using the prayer guide. We never understood the far reaching impact of church askings, and I don't think most people do. If you want to purchase a prayer guide for yourself, here is the link: <https://uwfaith.mn.co/plans/1898869>

Road-trip to Mondulkiri



Although Tom works in Phnom Penh and I work just outside the capital city in Kien Svay, GBGM-Cambodia sponsors mission projects and churches all over the country. In late February, Helen Camarce, the GBGM-Cambodia country coordinator, took the entire staff on a two night field trip to Mondulkiri Province to see the mission work there and experience another region of the country. Mondulkiri is the largest and most sparsely populated province in Cambodia. In the northeast of the country, it borders Vietnam to the east and south. We rode a bus about six hours to get there.

One project GBGM conducts in Mondulkiri involves training people to incorporate natural farming techniques into their agricultural practices. While we were there, we helped plant fruit trees to add to the already impressive orchard.

The topography and the climate of Mondulkiri differs substantially from Phnom Penh. Mountainous and cool, Mondulkiri reminded us of the Appalachian region of the US. Exceptions: monkeys and bogunvelias. It never actually freezes, even there. Highlights of the trip for us were attending a worship service at the Mondulkiri Methodist Church and seeing the stunning Bousra Waterfall. As always, we enjoyed spending time with the staff, most of whom are young women whose devotion to God and to the ministries of GBGM-Cambodia inspires us. On our last evening, they treated us to an impromptu Apsara dance recital around the campfire.

How can we support the work God is doing through you?

People ask us that question often,. Of course, our first answer is that you can pray for us. And we do believe that is the most important way to support us. But sending missionaries is expensive. The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church funds our work. And they ask us to try to raise \$25,000 annually (\$50,000 total!) to help support our missionary service. So as awkward as it is to ask for money, if you want to support our work and can, please give!

Option #1: The GBGM Giving portal. It can feel complicated to support missionaries through the GBGM giving portal, but once you get the hang of it, it's not as hard as it seems. Go to the GBGM website www.umcmmission.org. Click on the red GIVE NOW button. Then click on FIND AN ADVANCE PROJECT OR MISSIONARY. Then click on MISSIONARIES and search by name or number. When you see the missionary, click on their name, and then click DONATE NOW.

Option #2: You can use the camera on your phone and scan one of the URL codes below. Click the link on your phone, and that will take you straight to the designated GBGM giving portal.

DELECIA CAREY

Advance #3022831



TOM CAREY

Advance #3022832



CAMBODIA MISSION INITIATIVE

Advance #00230A



Option #3: You may write a check and mail it. Be sure to include the missionary or project name and advance number on the memo line.

Global Ministries/UMCOR

GPO

P.O. Box 9068

New York, NY 10087-9068