

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." —1 John 5:14

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September 2016

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Enthusiasm for cardamom grows

A Story of Transformation from the Phongsaly Agriculture Team

Grandfather Por Ner is a 65-year-old farmer from Phialor Kao Village in Mai District. In the past he and his family relied mostly on rotational upland farming of rice for their food and on opium for income to buy clothes and other necessities. Growing upland rice is hard work, and opium is now illegal, so Por Ner wanted to try something different and be an example for others in his village.

In 2010 Grandfather Por Ner was chosen to join a study tour to learn about cardamom. With World Renew support he planted 300 shoots in 2010 and participated in training so that he knew the techniques for planting, maintaining, harvesting, and drying. The first harvest was in 2013, and Grandfather Por Ner made almost 5 million kip (about \$600) from selling his cardamom. The next year he made \$637, and in 2015 he made \$750, a reasonable income for families in this area. In the past few months he has been able to use this income to purchase a pipe to bring water to his new fishpond, where he is planning to raise ducks and pigs, and to plant fruit trees in an integrated system. He also was able to take his daughter-in-law to the hospital for medical treatment. He said, "Before, I only had income from selling opium to buy things for my family. But now I don't grow opium; I grow cardamom and get income from that to buy clothes for my grandchildren and to pay for medical treatment."



Until 2015, traders were buying dried cardamom directly from local farmers, who used a crude method of drying over a fire (as suggested by the project in 2010). However, as market demand shifted toward higher quality cardamom, the traders started buying unprocessed cardamom from the farmers, at a lower price, and then drying it themselves using a better process. This year the project is helping several farmers, including Por Ner, to build an oven using a proven design that has been used in other areas. This will help them to obtain a higher price for the cardamom they grow.



Grandfather Por Ner explains that when he started in 2010, there was not much interest in growing cardamom in Phialor Kao Village: "When World Renew first promoted growing cardamom here, most people were not interested. Some planted but did not take care of the cardamom. But I took proper care of my garden, and my plants grew well. Over time, we heard more and more stories of farmers in other districts earning good income from cardamom, so others in the village became interested and asked me for shoots."

Grandfather Por Ner provided over 40 families, some in his village and others in surrounding villages, with cardamom shoots so that they could begin growing as well. World Renew also supported many other families in Phialor Kao, and now nearly all families are growing and will soon benefit from cardamom. When World Renew provides villagers with shoots, we have two main requests: first, that farmers take good care of what they have received, and, second, when the cardamom starts to grow well, pass along the blessing to others by providing them with shoots and training on how to care for the cardamom.

For the future, in addition to adding value by drying the cardamom, Grandfather Por Ner plans to keep increasing the size of his cardamom plantation and encouraging others to do the same. In addition, he is planning a diverse integrated farming system incorporating a fishpond, ducks, pigs, and fruit trees. Grandfather Por Ner is indeed proving to be a very good role model for others in his village.

Fennema Family Recent and Upcoming Events:

We were on deputation this past summer of 2016 and greatly enjoyed our time in Canada with family and friends. Now we are back in Laos, and the children and Moe Moe are back into their school routine. Matthew has already commented that this school year is going by too fast (a good sign that he is enjoying school!).

Deputation always provides a special and rewarding time to visit with many churches and individual supporters and to raise awareness about development-related issues at grade schools and high schools. There are too many highlights to summarize here about spending time in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Visalia and the almond valley area in California; and southern Ontario—but I want to say thanks to everyone who hosted, joined, or was involved in our deputation visits in one way or another.

During our visit to Canada, our daughter Monica, currently in grade 11, visited five universities, each with interesting programs that would equip her with the skills to pursue her passion to be an effective teacher of young children. Please pray, as she will need to make a decision soon about where to study and then begin to apply for acceptance and scholarships.

Time with family and friends during our holiday in June and July, split between southern Ontario and British Columbia, was filled with wonderful memories. Just to name a few highlights: Monica, Maria, and Matthew had their first experience with picking strawberries as a summer job. Canada Day Parade and fireworks. Winning the balloon toss competition at the Frisian Picnic in Pinehurst Lake Conservation Area. Enjoying farm life—newborn calves and puppies, harvesting crops, watching farmers hard at work! A Toronto day with friends at the Royal Ontario Museum, ending with a Blue Jays baseball game (where Mike met up with a friend he had not seen since graduating from high school). Exploring historic areas in Ottawa, Montreal, and Old Quebec City. Volunteering at the Kids Connect Event (the VBS program at Calvary CRC). Enjoying the beach, diving through the grotto, and bike rides with family at Sauble Beach in Ontario. Picking raspberries and wild blackberries (ouch!). Hanging out and having daily work assignments at a remote cabin on Canim Lake near 100 Mile House with a special group of friends in B.C. And many more.

On June 14, Mike had the wonderful opportunity to travel around with David Epp (CFGFB Regional Coordinator), visiting a number of individuals and farmers involved in Canadian Foodgrains Bank growing projects. CFGFB has a unique approach to raising funds—individuals or groups of people work together to plant, tend, harvest, and then sell any kind of crop. The proceeds, which are often matched by the Canadian government, go to CFGFB. CFGFB then supports projects like the one we are doing in Laos. Learn more about CFGFB here: <http://foodgrainsbank.ca/get-involved/growing-projects/>

At the end of January 2017 there will be an evaluation at the midpoint of the Xieng Khouang project to review progress made over the first half of the five-year phase and to identify recommendations for improvements needed.



*“So you, by the help of your God,
return, hold fast to love and justice”*

Hosea 12:6, ESV



What's that for?

Take a close look at this photo. What could this item be used for?

Don't hesitate or be shy, but send your best guess to Mike at fivemfamily@gmail.com.

The mystery will be revealed in the next newsletter!



Mystery Revealed

Your guesses were:

- A pineapple, up close and personal
- Small fish, cut open and being dried
- Turtles stacked up on each other
- Frogs

But the correct answer is :

Dried fish, hung up and being sold from a shop along the road in northern Laos!



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