

A LETTER FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE KINGDOM OF

CAMBODIA



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT: TROY ZIEL

Content in a Tent... for now by Bradley Ballard

This summer I was privileged to visit with dear family and friends in the United States. We were blessed to stay in many welcoming homes. Over the course of your life, perhaps you have had occasion to travel. Maybe you have stayed in homes, hotels, cabins, churches, or cars. Although I enjoy sleeping on a comfortable mattress, one of my favorite ways to spend a night is in a tent. This is because sleeping in a tent usually means being somewhere fun, exciting, and beautiful. However, a tent is a temporary structure. It is not as sturdy as a house with a foundation and solid walls. I have seen where a tree has fallen on a house and done considerable damage. Imagine it falling on a tent!

The apostle Peter used the phrase “sojourners & pilgrims” to describe how we should look at our lives here.¹ The apostle Paul, a seasoned traveler himself, encourages the believers in Corinth to “not lose heart”,² telling them that the closer they get to physical death, the nearer they are to spending eternity with God. Paul goes on to tell of how great it will be for our souls to move on from this perishable body, our tent, to our imperishable home above. He is excited about death because he knows it means he gets to go home.

I live in a sturdy, top-floor Cambodian “flat”. It is far from a tent. However, it

is still a temporary abode. Ever since moving here I have known it to be so. This knowledge increases my awareness and my zeal for the Work. As Christians our time on this earth is limited as well. Knowing this should increase our zeal to do the Lord’s work wherever we are. I may be able to know when I will return to the United States from Cambodia, however, I cannot know when my life will be over and when my fleshly tent will be destroyed. At the end of the apostle Peter’s life, his concern was that his brethren would know how to gain entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.³ He wanted them to “make their call and election sure.” This should be our focus as Christians. Someday, when our spirits leave these imperfect bodies behind and are called to a new permanent home, we will move to one of two destinations. One location is a place of eternal homelessness, hunger, burning, begging, and pleading for relief. The other is “...a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”⁴ Our faithfulness as we sojourn through this life determines which of these eternal homes we will inhabit. We should strive to be Godly and content in this life,⁵ and to find a way to work for the Kingdom of God while we are here.

No matter how many upgrades we make to our homes or how many acres

continued on page 3

PRAYER NEEDS IN CAMBODIA

Please consider the following in your prayers.

(B)=Ballard's request; (C)=Chan's request; (E) Edward's request

- ◆ opportunities to meet those who are seeking (B)
- ◆ strength and ability to balance responsibilities (B)
- ◆ better health for Vanny's mom (C)
- ◆ funds for his brothers school registration (C)
- ◆ Ken family as they rebuild their faith (E)
- ◆ growth for the church in Phnom Penh (E)
- ◆ Marissa & Gabriel as they begin homeschool (E)

THE FERVENT AND EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILS MUCH.

Rising from the Ashes

by Jonathan Edwards

A few months ago I wrote that many of the provincial churches were drying up. There are many reasons for their departure, and it pains me to write about it now, as it did then. As August began, we were met with more bad news. On the first day of the month, brother Ken Theara called to ask that we not come back to Steung Trang, the remaining church in the provinces outside of Phnom Penh. I was devastated.

His reasons were the tribulations the church had endured: they feel “black balled” and ostracized by the community; local police intimidation has them scared; pressure from denominational groups has taken its toll; and some members of their family have left home in a prodigal way. Brother Ken has asked that we stay away.

Unlike the other provincial churches that were not interested in the gospel, the Steung Trang church is having a crisis of faith.

continued on page 2

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My Work for the Kingdom

by Chan Vanny

August is a normal work month. Mostly I worked at home. Every Wednesday we have Acts bible study and Khmer bible study at Bong Jonathan's house.

After Bong Bradley and Bong Brandi came back, once a week I go to their house to work on Khmer songs, and learn how to sing with Bradley. I like to go to their house because I enjoy having breakfast with them.

More and more I kind of like the Wednesday because it is a bible study and fellowship day. We have dinner together. Some times it is the collection of food from each family, but some time we are lazy. So just eat food that Bong Marissa cooked and it is jolly good.

After Bong Jon rearrange the schedule, we extend the Sunday as the bible study days: after Church we have lunch together, and we have Romans study. Now every Sunday I go pick up car to pick up my mom and sometime other people to join Church with us. I like to do it because we want to have more people to hear about God from the Bible.

A week before the last week of the month I went to the guest house alone.. guess what? I record the sound for the Bible study to put in the mp3 and share it with the people at the provinces, but this month only for Mr. Lim heng because we have only one trip.

Once a week I called to the people at the province to encourage, say hello, and discuss about the bible some. Some of the time I chatted with my friend on facebook and try to tell them about God. Some time I invite them to my house, but they answer they are busy since I invite them to listen to the bible, and not to the party. But thank God for this month for every blessing that God blessed me and my family and the world.. Thank God for worked in my mom's heart that she decided to come to Church with us. Thank God for my two brothers for finished another year of school, and going again this year with higher class. Thank God for everything!

sowing AND WATERING



Rising from the Ashes continued from page 1

They have been hit with many fiery arrows from the devil, and their shield of faith has fallen. As far as we know, the Ken family has not worshipped faithfully on Sundays since July. Theara plans to sell their house and relocate. Please pray that the Kens will have faith to begin worshipping again, and that God's hand will lead them to Phnom Penh, where they can join with the body of Christ here.

This news was extremely difficult on Vanny and me. So many questions went through our heads: Are we doing everything wrong? Has this too been in vain? I now solicit your prayers to help us rise from the ashes of what seems to be a year of little return.

We are thankful for the church in Phnom Penh. In February and March, we set goals to spend more time in town. It seems as though God's providence has slowly closed certain doors, and opened broadly the door of our outreach in the capital city. Over the past few months, we have seen a maturity and growth among the Christians here.

In August, specifically, we have seen much growth in the willing spirit of our Khmer brethren to reach out into the community, inviting people to study the Bible and worship with us on Sundays. While numbers are not the final authority to a healthy church, we are happy to see more visitors come regularly. Vanny has been diligent to reach out to his mother and two younger brothers. They have been willing come when they are able, as well as bring friends! Including children, our usual Sunday crowd is made up of 12 people, but the past few Sundays we have had up to 9 visitors. We begin studying with Vanny's mother and brothers this month. I solicit your prayers for their hearts to be open to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our study on the book of Acts has been very healthy for all involved. Weekly, we each take a chapter to study and present in a small group

study. Vanny is challenged to grow as a teacher for the local church with very practical chapters about the church of the New Testament.

This month I began testing a series of simple instructional videos. My first video, "Unlocking Khmer Script: A Test Video," is on YouTube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8f-XR72SdhI> In September, I plan to make one more test video on Khmer Culture before beginning a Bible series, in hopes of reaching out to our many Khmer friends. Stay tuned for new videos.

On the last Saturday of the month we traveled to visit our friend, Mr. Lim Haeng. We have had several good Bible studies with him, and we feel that he is coming closer to rightly dividing the Word. He is a man with a denominational background, who has recently dealt with challenging life struggles. He has a Buddhist wife, who does not share his faith, and three small boys. He worked for brother Song Seng, but when Song did not allow him time off for worship, Mr. Haeng quit.

On this visit, we were able to leave with him the following study material: (1) God; (2) Authority for Christianity; (3) Old Testament; (4) New Testament; (5) Two Testaments; (6) Sin; (7) Jesus Christ the Savior; and (8) Faith. As Mr. Haeng has no formal education, each printed lesson was accompanied by a recording of brother Vanny's voice on a solar powered mp3 player. While at his house, he invited a few ladies to come for lunch so that we could share the gospel. We pray for further opportunity to share the gospel in this village.

From the beginning to the end of August was both tumultuous and rewarding. We began in despair when hearing from the Ken's in such a manner. However, our work in Phnom Penh and potential leads elsewhere have raised our spirits and we press on do the Lord's work in Cambodia for the growth and good of the Kingdom.

AMERICAN HANDS IN CAMBODIAN SOIL

Content in this Tent... continued from page 1

we own; no matter how big our family room, kitchen or man-cave may be, none of these amenities can go with us into eternity. Looking to physical things will never give us the peace and protection that can be found in God's kingdom.

Anyone who has ever had to live out of a suitcase can surely appreciate getting to Go Home. There is unique comfort there. Imagine the comfort of living with God and knowing that you will never have to pack up your tent ever again. The guarantee of God through the Spirit is a great comfort as we travel through this life; "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We're confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." ⁶

Footnotes: 1) 1 Peter 2:11; 2) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 3) 2 Peter 1:10-15; 4) 2 Corinthians 5:1; 5) 1 Timothy 6:6-7; 6) 2 Corinthians 5:5-8

Understanding My Mission

by Bradley Ballard

The foreign field can be an uncertain and sometimes frightening place. It is, after all, foreign. When we read where Jesus issued to Christians His "Great Commission," our eyes can easily look to the horizon and imagine all of the souls out there who need the Gospel. It's true; they're out there. However, when Jesus said that "the fields are white unto harvest," He meant the fields everywhere. One great truth that living in Cambodia has helped me to see is that we all live in a 'foreign field.' In a manner of speaking, this makes all Christians everywhere, missionaries. You may never have left your home town, but you are in a foreign country to this writer. Our trip to the States over the summer afforded us wonderful opportunities to reacquaint ourselves with dear loved ones, as well as to meet new friends. Despite the joys of being with family and friends, there was a

part of me that wanted to be back home in Cambodia, where the once frightening and unfamiliar has now become comfortable. As Christians and citizens of the Kingdom of God, we are strangers and sojourners in this life. We should all strive to be missionaries in our given field. I regret that I needed to move to a foreign country to see the value of the field that is the U.S. However, now I can look forward to moving overseas once again to take part in that foreign work with dear brethren...and this time I won't have to learn a new language.



Visiting w/ Timothy in his mission field



largest attendance at services so far...

EVERY DAY *life* for an American FAMILY

I have touched on this subject before, but with the past months' events, I will revisit the topic of *healthcare*.

I have the blessing of caring for 3 beautiful, smart, and, *thanks to their mother's genes*, sometimes accident-prone children. As every parent knows, there are certain frames of time that IF an injury can happen...it WILL. For the past month, Evangeline has been experiencing this phenomenon.

Thankfully, since we have access to fairly reliable pharmacies, which enable us to keep our first aid kit stocked, I have been able to care for the minor wounds at home. Though mostly reliable, I always check expiration dates on everything I purchase. Treating the usual collection of scrapes and cuts

with old meds would be a bit counterproductive. One time, a pharmacist emptied an entire shelf of expired children's pain reliever, after I noticed the bottle she sold me was old.

Now, for the big hurts that require more expertise than I have to offer, we must turn to the hospital. There are small clinics here that care for small wounds requiring stitches and the such. However, we have been warned from every medical source to NEVER visit one since a medical license can be purchased here without ever having received medical training of any kind. Often, people must go to the hospital after a clinic visit due to receiving incorrect meds, or contracting an infection from unsanitary conditions.

So, when Evangeline took a tumble and hurt her shoulder, we made the trip to the new hospital. Walking through the doors was like stepping off the continent, and onto home soil: shiny white surfaces; the smell of bleach; and nurses buzzing around in crisp uniforms. We checked in at the front desk

and settled in the waiting room. Soon after, a clerk came over to us and asked how we were going to pay for the visit. That was all she wanted to know. Huh, strange...

Later we found out that if you do not have enough money with you, you will be denied treatment. End of story. Evie was cared for just like at a hospital in the states... because we had money. Living among people that largely are not able to use their health care system makes me ache with the injustice. I longed for home and how things work there. Yes, the prices and payment system may be convoluted at times but at least a child with a soaring fever or broken arm isn't turned away because mom and dad don't have enough money in their pockets at that exact moment. I try my best to heal and soothe the boo-boos on my own but when mommy can't fix it I must rely on the Great Physician to calm my worries and doubts and to guide the hands with the (possibly purchased) medical license.