

VISION

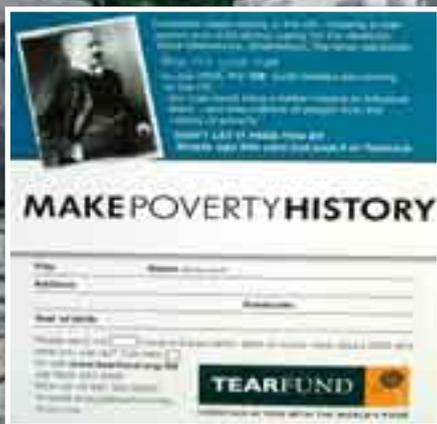
for Cambodia • Number 130 : Summer Issue 2005

In this issue:-

Canadians In Cambodia
Faith in Action
10th Youth Conference
Jewels of Cambodia



Moncton Wesleyan Youth Team
(see page 6)



Join the TEARFUND Campaign
(see page 4)



SAO Cambodia

Registered Name: Southeast Asian Outreach
UK Charity Number: 293382

UK HEADQUARTERS

SAO Cambodia, Bawtry Hall, Bawtry,
Doncaster, DN10 6JH, UK

Executive Director: Geoff Collett
e-mail: g.collett@saocambodia.org

Telephone: 01302-714004
Fax: 01302-710027
e-mail: admin@saocambodia.org
Web address: www.saocambodia.org
Operations Director: Ivor Greer
ivor@saocambodia.org

SAO Cambodia, c/o ICC, PO Box 612, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Tel: +855 23 215200
email: hosea.pmd@icc.org.kh
SAO Field Facilitator: Sarah Chinn

TRUSTEES

David Adams, Andrew Au, Rev Andrew Bridgen, Dr Peter Brierley, Keith Bushell, John Heard, Denzil Jarvis, Peter Redman, Sue Stevens, Rev John Wallis.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SAO Cambodia is an evangelical inter-denominational mission and development agency, founded in 1973 by Major Taing Chhirc of the Cambodian Evangelical Church. The Object is to promote the Christian faith and relieve poverty and distress among the peoples of Southeast Asia. Work is now solely amongst Cambodians.

SAO Cambodia is a member of International Co-operation Cambodia (ICC), Global Connections, the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) and British NGO's for Development (BOND).

VISION for Cambodia: Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. News for Praise and Prayer is issued with VISION magazine

DONATIONS

We rely on God to meet our needs through gifts from Churches, individual supporters and funding agencies and events. All donations are acknowledged unless otherwise requested. General gifts may be allocated to the greatest need, although donors can indicate a preference. Funds given for a specific appeal will be used for that purpose.

We invite individual donors who pay UK tax to complete a Gift Aid Declaration Form (obtainable from the Bawtry Office). This will enable us to claim back from the Inland Revenue tax already paid (currently 28% of the gift). Cheques should be made payable to "SAO Cambodia" and sent to the Bawtry Office.

BANKERS

National Westminster Bank Plc, 23, Market Place,
Bawtry, Doncaster, DN10 6JL, UK.
Current A/c: 69404054; Sort Code: 60-02-50
A/c name: SAO Cambodia

AUDITORS

Mazars, Mazars House, Gildersome, Leeds, LS27 7JN

SAO Cambodia, Bawtry Hall,
Bawtry, Doncaster, DN10 6JH
Tel: 01302-714004; Email: admin@saocambodia.org
Web site: www.saocambodia.org



SAO Cambodia is working in partnership in Cambodia
with four other missions as part of
International Co-operation Cambodia (ICC)

Editorial - Reconciliation

The progress towards the Khmer Rouge trials grinds slowly on, with international interests squabbling about funding and the impartiality of the Cambodian judiciary. Only two men are currently in custody, Ta Mok, the former KR chief of staff, and the former head of Tuol Sleng prison camp, Deuch. The other senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge still alive reside in relative comfort in Phnom Penh or the former KR stronghold in Pailin.

What do Cambodians think about the prospect of trials? Some amongst the young know little of the history and aren't particularly interested; those who lived through those years are divided. Some wonder at the wisdom of digging up the past and others believe that a South African style Truth and Reconciliation process is the only way to put the past behind them.

The truth is that the legacy of those years still blights Cambodian society, evident in the self-interest of many of the politicians, the endemic corruption and the lack of trust. I do not know whether trials will solve these problems but I do believe that the only real solution for Cambodia lies in the example beginning to be set by the Cambodia Christians. Their care for those around them, their efforts to work together, the trusting relationships they have and the concern for fairness and justice are making a real impression on those around them.

One of the imprisoned former Khmer Rouge, Deuch, has made a profession of Christian faith and I admit to awaiting with interest any testimony he makes in court. But Cambodia's solution lies not just in truth and justice but also in the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the Cambodian Christians as they try to heal the hurts of their country through their Christian witness.

Geoff Collett
Executive Director




Thank God for our dear friend Miss Eva Bennett who has gone to be with the Lord, but we rejoice in the certain knowledge of her eternal hope and destiny. A Thanksgiving



Service was held on March 16th in Minehead. The occasion was just as Eva had wanted, with few black suits and ties. The tributes described her life of sacrificial service and obedience in the service of God.

Eva had been an SAO Cambodia Council member in the UK from January 1981, after returning from missionary service in China and Thailand with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. She gave her time voluntarily to SAO in the UK until she retired around 1990.

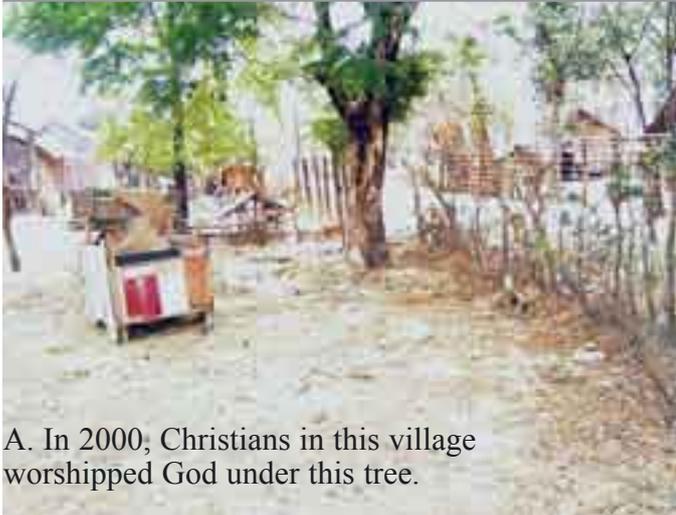
We were grateful for her depth of mission experience, invaluable during SAO's formative years. We appreciated her great interest and support for all our personnel and the orientation she gave our staff heading overseas. After retirement she maintained her interest and it was not very long ago that she attended her last SAO Weekend Conference.

Front Cover Main Photo: courtesy Geoff Collett

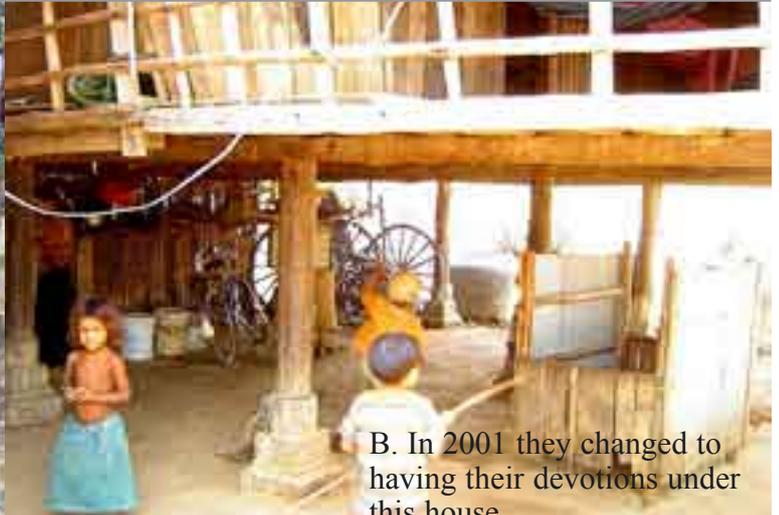


FAITH in Action: How to transform lives

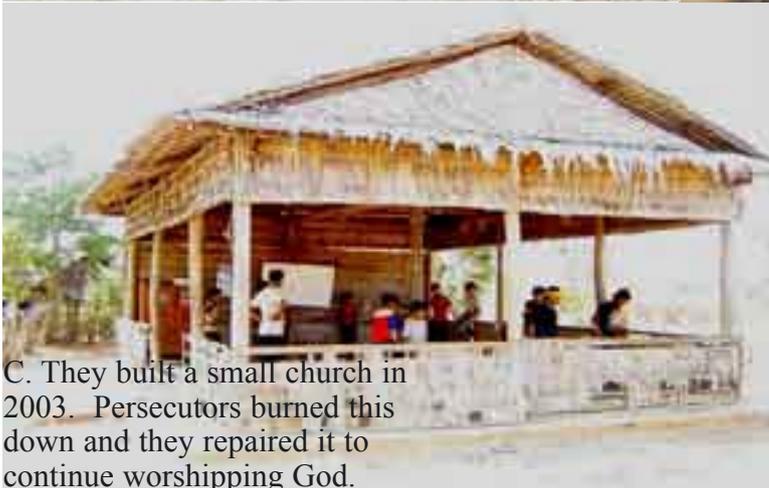
The FAITH project (**Food And Income generation, Training & Health**) is working primarily with the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) and aiming towards local management. FAITH develops the capacity of poor village churches to design and implement holistic, small-scale development initiatives within local communities.



A. In 2000, Christians in this village worshipped God under this tree.



B. In 2001 they changed to having their devotions under this house.



C. They built a small church in 2003. Persecutors burned this down and they repaired it to continue worshipping God.



D. This year they have built a concrete Church to worship God. The opening was attended by the District governor and other local authorities.

E. TEAR Fund have made a video about FAITH's approach to development to use as a training resource for their partners in other countries .

How to transform a village
According to the testimony of the six members of the village's Christian Core Group, people saw Christians modelling various concepts in community. They help needy people by providing food and clothing, their families love each other and seldom suffer from domestic violence, they help the sick by providing funding to buy medicine from the Church's offering, expect God to heal sick people and they stop drinking alcohol and gambling. The FAITH project itself, working without religious, gender or racial discrimination in their community, also modelled good Christian values and standards. 🇰🇷

?? Questions ??

An Austrian radio reporter asked us some questions recently; you might be interested to read our answers:

1. What do you see as the big role for Christians in Cambodia?

Early on Christian agencies led the way in bringing relief and development work to Cambodia, post Khmer Rouge/Vietnamese occupation, sharing their understanding of God's love through the work of their hands. Christians still have a role in this area with more focus now being given to marginalised and vulnerable groups (AIDS sufferers, Sex workers, ethnic minorities, Street children etc.)

As the country is currently open to church related work some agencies now have a 'Mission' registration and are actively involved in supporting the burgeoning national church in its efforts to bring reconciliation and help to fellow Cambodians as they reach out and share their faith with their neighbours.

2. How do you see the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism in Cambodia?

Christianity and Buddhism hold to very different world views, yet in Cambodia, at grass roots level, there is an openness to discuss beliefs, at least with expat Christians. Between the higher levels of organisational structure there is a mutual acceptance

of the value of the social support provided by both faiths, but little motivation to cooperate in any ventures for fear of giving confusing messages. At village level, nominal Buddhists sometimes use their 'national religion' as a means of pressurising Christians if they are doing something, which challenges the traditional ways.

3. What does Christianity have to offer to survivors of the Khmer Rouge?

Jesus Christ taught forgiveness of, and love for, those who would harm you as we ourselves have been forgiven by God. This contrasts with traditional Cambodian approaches of 'bury and forget', which have only led to continuing mistrust, division, violence and mental health problems. National Christians, despite their youthful faith and lack of leadership, astound their neighbours by their demonstrations of care and concern for each other and for those in need in their villages. Christians believe that only the love and healing of past hurts, which a relationship with Jesus brings, can enable Cambodians to address the issues of history, build trust, mend relationships and enable the country to move forward.

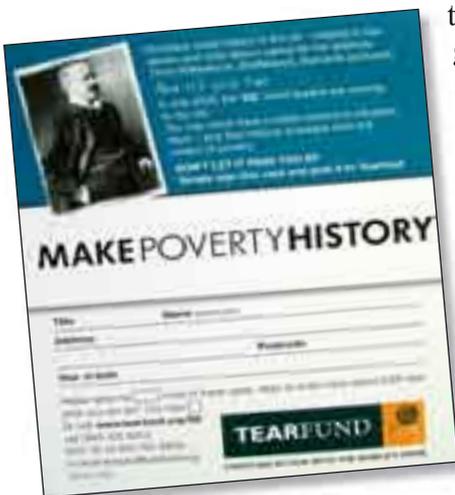
Miraculous transformations from divided, battling and depressed Cambodian villages, to places of hope, cooperation and kindness brought about by the activities of village churches, aided by mission agencies, have occurred. These are now used worldwide to demonstrate how God uses Christians to heal relationship, when they are willing to be used. ■

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Today the gap between the world's rich and the world's poor is wider than ever. Despite the promises of world leaders, at our present sluggish rate of progress the world will fail dismally to reach agreed targets to halve poverty by 2015.

This year we in the UK have an opportunity to take a lead to reduce global poverty with global leaders meeting here for the G8 summit. We seek TRADE justice, we need fair trade not free trade. We want to DROP the DEBT, the world's poorest countries' unpayable debt should be dropped. We want MORE and better AID, aim to meet the agreed target of 0.7% national income and make the money work more effectively.

Why not join SAO Cambodia and TEAR FUND and petition Tony Blair to use his influence at the G8 meeting in June to **MAKE POVERTY HISTORY**. More information is available at www.tearfund.org/2005 & www.makepovertyhistory ■



Drugs Awareness

Elaine, SAO Cambodia's Accounts Manager writes:

In fear and trepidation I landed in Phnom Penh on November 13th in order to teach at two Basic Drugs Awareness Workshops, being hosted by the HOSEA team. This was definitely a new challenge and I really hadn't a clue what to expect or how I would go about conducting workshops and through a translator too.

Cambodia has an increasing problem with drug takers and pushers. Over 60 per cent of Cambodia's population is under the age of 24, and it is this group that is the most vulnerable. The authorities are trying to crack down on trafficking with large posters warning about the dangers of drugs plastered on many billboards. But it is still easy to get hold of drugs and the situation is confused by corruption in the police force. One man was enticed into a police set up. As he arrived to make a drug deal officers arrested him, handcuffed him, beat him, then asked him to pay \$5,000 in order to avoid a 20 year prison sentence. Drugs are sometimes confiscated in order to sell them back to drug dealers.



Workshop Participants



Elaine teaching in the Drugs Awareness Workshop

One in five students uses drugs

With the rise of the nightclub scene in the past few years, students from wealthier families are using ecstasy, crystal methamphetamine, Valium, cocaine and the "date rape" drug Rohypnol. Moreover, young children are sniffing glue and rubber cement to get high. One in five high school students have used, or are still using, illegal drugs. Heroin trafficking is on the rise and it seems everyone from street children through wealthy businessmen to expatriates is using illicit drugs.

There is only one formal ten-bed drug detoxification centre in Cambodia, opened after aid workers amongst the street children found that more than 70 percent of them were regular drug users. The demand for places is high, with about three people turned away daily. For most there is no access to rehabilitation and

drug treatment. The Cambodian daily newspaper reports that the country "is in the midst of an HIV pandemic and explosive drug use crisis."

Faced with this information it was a joy to see such a variety of people attending each workshop, to learn more about drugs and the impact that they have on the lives of others and desiring to share their knowledge with others.

My third trip to Cambodia proved to be not only a challenge but also the fulfilment of prayer. I have had a desire to encounter new things. It was only as I returned from Cambodia that I realised that my prayer, which was that of Jabez, "Oh that You would bless me and enlarge my territory. Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm ..." (1 Chron 4:10) had been answered.

What do you hold in your hand? Is it teaching or expertise that you could share? No matter how small your gifting seems to you, hold it out and watch Jesus multiply it and widen your horizons. There's a job waiting and people who are more than willing to learn. 🍷



Canadians in Cambodia

Moncton Wesleyan Church, New Brunswick, CANADA sent a youth team to work with SAO Cambodia in February. It took them a year to prepare for the trip and God honoured this commitment, really using them to reach the people of Cambodia. The young people they met in meetings, Orphanages, Hospitals, Churches and on the streets were blessed by music, dance, craft, illusion, practical help and talks as the Canadians shared their love for God.

In one of the guesthouses we were staying at in Cambodia there was a poster that said "Cambodia: Journey of a Lifetime". That is the best way I can think of to describe our trip. It was a spiritual, emotional and a physical journey.

We were a group of 22 Canadians; 3 leaders and 19 students, traveling to the other side of the world to share the gospel and show the love of Christ. We had been preparing for this for almost a year, learning the history of the country, cultural etiquette, greetings and how to minister to Buddhists.

On February 25th, 2005 our physical journey began. It took us 4 planes and 2 full travel days to get us from freezing Canada with a meter of snow to Cambodia and the intense heat. It was so exciting, as we landed in Cambodia, to see the country from the air, it was all brown and dry, but still so beautiful. Once we had gathered our baggage we boarded our huge blue bus, as if we didn't stand out enough already. It was so amazing none of us said a word; we were all in awe of the buildings, landscape and the scenery. Every once in a while people would exclaim "Look at that!" and of course, we all



would turn to where that one person was and begin feverishly snapping pictures. As we settled into our guesthouses and got ready for our first night in Cambodia it was the end of one part of the trip and only the beginning of another.

We had finally completed the physical journey and the emotional journey was just beginning, we were thrilled to be there. As the trip progressed, more and more emotions filled our days, we were in love with the country, the children we met at the various outreaches, the teens at the youth rally and even more in love with God. We had a sobering experience at the killing fields on our second day there; it was so heart wrenching to see our Cambodian guide Vuthy and his young son walking around the place where their family and countrymen had been slaughtered.

It is so hard to describe all of the details of each person's experience, so here are some highlights from some of the teens' point of view:

God's colours are made evident through His people. Each race is a reflection of His power, character, beauty and strength.
Leanne Bandy



Painting an orphanage called the "Love House" was one of the many highlights. As soon as we arrived the children greeted us and immediately latched on to us. It was great to give them the individual attention that they do not receive. Half the group spent time with the kids playing games, singing and making crafts with them, while the other half of the group painted a future bedroom for the orphans. It was humbling

Our SAO guide, Geoff Collett, took us to the Farmer Livelihood Development site just outside of Phnom Penh. This was definitely one of, if not the top, mission's highlight of the trip. Originally I thought we would be simply walking around FLD taking in all there was to see, but was pleasantly surprised when Geoff revealed to us that we would be getting right in the water to help catch some fish. Those who were brave enough entered the murky waters and took hold of the net and dragged it across the bottom of the pond, as fish would bump and brush up against our legs and jump right in front of our faces. Once we had swept the net across the entire pond we pulled it ashore and to our surprise saw an abundance of fish. The workers would tell us which ones were spawning and we would all make vain attempts

to grab the fish. It was an interesting, entertaining and educational experience. The entire visit really opened our eyes to different types of missions work no longer just sitting out and witnessing on the streets, performing projects at schools, orphanages and hospitals. Our FLD was a practical way of showing the love of Christ, and it showed how everyone has a field of expertise to use their gifts and abilities to minister. "Catch a man a fish and you'll feed him for a day, teach him to fish and you'll feed him for a lifetime." This is exactly what FLD is doing, teaching Cambodians practical skills to give to themselves and their families for a better life and a brighter future.

Mark Cann



to see where they would have to sleep. The room was dark and the walls were made of rough boards greatly in need of sanding before we painted. Bringing a little colour into their lives was the least we could do. Even though the work was hard, it was a blessing to give a little of our time. Hopefully our visits showed them they were special and loved by their Father in heaven and their painted room can be a daily reminder of that. Michael Barnes

Our mission's trip to Cambodia was an amazing experience which impacted my life more than I could ever imagine. One moment which stuck out to me during our two week stay was the night a group of us teens had the opportunity to roam the streets of Phnom Penh sharing the news about Jesus. To be honest, I was terrified at first. The sun was quickly setting and soon enough we would be left in the dark streets of an unfamiliar country. But my fears suddenly vanished as kids gathered in a field and the one Khmer lady with us began singing songs and playing games. I was no longer aware of the darkness surrounding me or all the unfamiliar faces, sounds, and scents. All I could see were

the beaming faces of these young children who were so happy we came to play with them and share stories with them. That night really showed me what a difference it makes to step out of your comfort zone and share God's word, even to simple children who may not grasp the concept right away. Showing God's love through your actions makes an impacting impression. If that means you must take a step out of your comfort zone, don't let your fears take control. Trust that He will be with you every step of your journey.

Katrina Niles

"The FLD (Farmer Livelihood Development Project) was extremely interesting. It was good to see people doing practical work as missionaries. It's not only limited to speakers and preachers."

Jamey Cann

Cambodia, for me, has turned my life in a totally new direction aimed at World Missions, and fulfilling my task in the Great Commission.

Steven Higgs



As a team, we built some incredible relationships with Cambodians; however, it was at a Wesleyan Youth Rally that we all made a real friend or two. It was an awesome blessing to be able to take part in the annual youth rally for over forty Cambodian teens. Many of them spoke a little bit of English, and some even knew French (which is a second language to a few of our team members).

We joined right in with them, bridging the huge cultural gap to become just a bunch of teens hanging out. We had a chance to play a game of soccer with them, Canada vs. Cambodia. They beat us 4-2. There were some teary eyes, as we had to say goodbye the day after we had met them all. It was a fantastic way to end the missions work portion of our trip.

Jeremy MacDonald

There is so much more to say, but I would have to write a full novel to express it all, the trip to Cambodia was for all of us, life altering. None of us will ever be the same and as a result of the trip some of us have felt the pull on our hearts to become full-time missionaries. It was so wonderful to see with our own eyes that God really is working all over the world. We have had just a small glimpse of what heaven will be like, with all of the different cultures worshipping together in unique and beautiful ways.

Jennie McCormick



10th Youth Conference

Over the past ten years the Youth Commission has been running Conferences to train and bring fellowship and spiritual refreshment to many young people. The leaders involved in this year's conference let us know a little of what the experience is like.

How to Listen to 160 Sermons in One Week Craig Greenfield, Trembling, he holds a rather sad and wilted-looking plant high in the air and explains that "God is the vine and we are the branches..." After a little bit more gesticulating and pacing around he takes his seat and with a rush of euphoria realizes he just preached his first sermon - a one-minute sermon!

Another young person leaps to their feet to take his place and give their own object lesson, this time brandishing a cell phone...

I have listened to 120 of these object lessons already this week, and tomorrow I will listen to 40 more as the practical application part of my workshop on "Creative Bible Teaching".

Frankly, it's an honor to be part of this.

These young people are full of energy and keen to learn how to teach in a way that brings glory to God and doesn't send the people to sleep.

I am passing on techniques and insights that I have picked up over the years. Practical stuff like how to stop your knees knocking and how to make sure your lessons don't go in one ear and out the other. And profound stuff too, like the particular vulnerability of

teachers and preachers to fall into the pride trap.

On my last session I had a guy who got up and preached that God is the true grape and we are the branches!

Feelings - Brian Maher

Well, it's over. It feels very strange not to be surrounded by 400 excited young people everywhere I turn, as was my lot for the last six days.

The young Cambodian leaders from various churches in Phnom Penh pretty much ran the conference. They ran security, games at the beach, water safety, worship, and Cambodian youth leaders served as counselors of their small groups. The theme was about How God loves us, how we can love Him, how we can love our brethren, then love our neighbors by doing good works in the community (Matt 5:16) so that unbelievers will glorify God. A hair-raising display of pyrotechnics got the campfire going with quite a bang. The campfire was a time where young people gave testimony of how this 10th Anniversary Youth Camp touched their lives. They also had time to recommit themselves to fulfilling their vision for their church and/or community. Afterwards, there was a time of cultural dancing to cultural music, and then they engaged in cultural games.

Todd Smith, a short, stocky, buffed, and balding

New Zealander taught a workshop on how to build an effective Youth

Group. It was the most preferred workshop for those newer in faith. This was the third year in a row where we put him in the same



Brian Maher and some of the Youth Leaders

workshop location. From the camp director's air-conditioned command post, we could see Todd stomping around among the campers emphasizing the point he is trying to make. The crazy guy is wearing a long sleeved black shirt? What's up with that shirt, Todd? "Well, number one, I wear a black shirt because it doesn't show that I have drenched it with sweat. Number two, I wear long sleeves because of the fire ants dropping out of the trees down my neck and onto my arms." Todd has never requested we change his workshop location because he believes that suffering is a part of the Youth Camp experience!

Where have all the adults Gone? - Mark Fender

The target group of the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia's Youth Commission is youth with leadership potential between the ages of 15-30. For a foreigner, this may seem like a broad age range, reaching pretty late into life. But it fits the Cambodian context, where 'youth' lasts all the way up until marriage – whenever that may happen to take place!

In any event, it would seem axiomatic that training young people in this age category would require the active efforts of 'adults' – those who have already moved past this category of 'youth' and have the wisdom and experience that comes with advanced years. The recent 10th annual Youth Leader Camp was

God is the true grape!





certainly no exception. The camp was coordinated in part by people clearly in the category of ‘adults’! In addition, the youth were privileged to learn from such



Cambodian leaders as **Rev. Heng Cheng**, Rev. Kong Phan Chhon, and Rev. Runnath Nara – again, all leaders with maturity and wisdom to offer

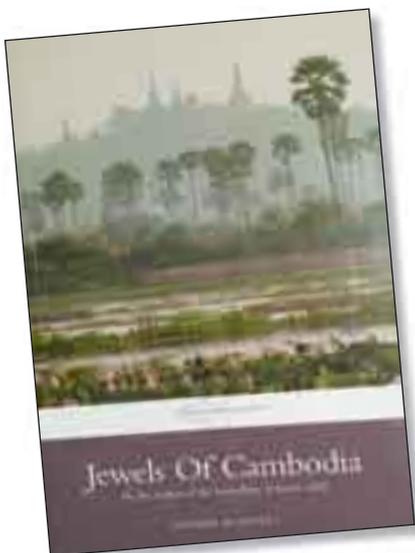
the next generation of youth. The camp was greatly assisted by the contribution of these ‘adults.’ But the contributions of these mature adults, as deeply valuable as they were, didn’t impress me as much as what these mature leaders did NOT do. Perhaps most obviously the security team was devoid of adults. They have the challenging job of enforcing the rules of the camp and maintaining Camp security: making sure people get to their rooms and stay in them at night, making sure no one leaves the camp, making sure that people have their name cards with them at all times – all very crucial issues! And ALL of the members of the security team were without question in the ‘youth’ category.

The same was true of the sports



team responsible for coordinating the game activities each afternoon of camp. The same was true of the small group leaders – trained by myself and my wife. Though advised by a mature adult (Pastor Bin David), the music team that actually led the worship was all young people. One critical person in the whole camp was Ms. Hem Sopheary, program coordinator for the camp. This significant responsibility was borne by a young woman in her early 20’s! It’s not that adults weren’t involved with these youth. Certainly, adults were available for consultation whenever there

was a problem. But what is most impressive is that the ‘adults’ are fading more and more into the background, and the ‘youth’ are becoming the front-line leaders of the camp. And I suppose that’s the whole point. This critical transition is reflective of the mission of the Youth Commission as a whole – for a group of mature leaders who care about youth to develop those youth into becoming a new generation of leadership. I caught a clear glimpse of that at this recent camp. It inspires hope for the future – and motivates the Youth Commission to continue fulfilling this significant mission! ❤️



JEWELS of Cambodia by Brenda Sloggett

The story of some of the precious jewels of the Cambodian Church, which has grown from 200 to 200,000 in 15 years. Brenda’s new book is:

“a testimony to how God can work despite the strongest opposition from Satan.”

“a story that needs to be told”,

“an enthralling tale of what is happening in Cambodia”

Copies are available from the SAO Office, price £6.

SAO Cambodia runs regular *Mission Awareness* trips to Cambodia, to see the work of the Mission, experience the culture, test God's calling and to be challenged to pray and support the work. Here are some excerpts from Mandy and Lynne's diaries, two of our recent attendees on the February 2005 trip.



Lynne and a friend from an orphanage

Day one, flew to Phnom Penh via Singapore, the flight was 14 hours. After watching about 8 movies and eating noodles for breakfast, lunch and dinner we arrived in Cambodia feeling more than a little jet lagged!

We started with our daily routine of breakfast and morning devotions before attending the New Life Khmer Church for their regular Sunday worship.

...flew to Ratanakiri which is in the north east of the country, bordering Vietnam. It was a particularly bumpy ride on this turbo prop plane.

We all piled into a very small boat and sped down river to another village to see some wells being built. When we anchored we noticed the temperature had soared to a whopping 42C!

...drove for two hours on very bumpy roads back to our guest house and when we got there Mandy broke the key off in the door!

...we travelled to the Cambodian Christian Arts Ministry. The children performed a number of dances and songs for us before

we were given a tour of the dormitories, the classrooms and the music room.

We then broke off into groups and prayed around the community for the people living there, whilst some of the group went to see the rubbish dump where people lived and worked.

Mooched around Siem Reap for a while before visiting the Angkor Association for the Disabled. The idea is to get amputees back to work rather than begging on the streets.

...we visited the Noah's Ark Sunday School and church which was basically under someone's house. We taught the kids to sing "My God is so big".

...on South East Asia's biggest lake, Tonle Sap until we reached the floating church where we attended their Sunday worship and afterwards rice soup was served up for the children.

Got up at the crack of dawn to attend the 6.30am Eucharist, only to find, when we got there it was the 6.30pm Eucharist!

In the afternoon we organised the activities for the HOSEA Children's Fun day.

...drove for two hours out of Phnom Penh to reach Sunshine House, the AIDS Orphanage. We spent the morning organising activities and playing with the children and then joined them for lunch.

Day fifteen, arrived back in the UK having had the most

wonderful, tiring, emotional, encouraging, frustrating, funny and challenging two weeks of our lives.

Mandy Hyland

It is impossible to do justice to such a life changing experience in a few words.

I was surprised by the traffic...like 'haphazard scurrying ants'

The projects gave the local people 'Hope' for their future.

I was surprised by the lack of good standard health care. To hear of this on television is not the same as seeing it for myself.

...privileged to visit a hospital near Ratanakiri, which made me appreciate the health care system we have. Family must stay and nurse the patient.

In a remote village I met people who had no written language and were unaware of their age or date of birth.

One visit is ingrained on my mind, the municipal dump. There is no refuse collection, as we know it. On the dump I saw people 'living like rats', rushing up to dustcarts to get the 'fresh' garbage bags before anyone else.

God certainly held my hand and walked with me through it all.

Language differences are no barrier to God. In prayer, praise and worship, God's presence was palpable and united we stood in his name.

Lynne Barnett

There will be another trip from the 10th to 25th of Feb 2006. If you are interested contact John Heard johnheard@btinternet.com

Sokhon's Story Part 2: No Hope

Sokhon writes the second part of her painful story. You can refresh your memory of the story so far by reading the first part on page 4 of the previous Vision magazine No: 129 Spring 2005.

Three days after we were chased out out from Lay, my fiancé's, apartment in Psar Tmey in the capital city of Phnom Penh, I can see my mother's face is full of sadness and her mind consumed by her sense of loss for my father. Her brain must be full of a thousand flickering thoughts, what has happened to my father and how she is going to cope with this entire situation alone? Must she be strong for her six children and 2 grandchildren plus the in-laws, my fiancé and his mother with his 4 brothers including their families? How can she be expected to take control of the situation when she has just come out from hospital? Every one realises that we must talk to each other before doing anything because we have to watch out for the Khmer Rouge soldiers to keep ourselves alive. The soldiers tell us to call them Samack Mitt, which means 'Equal friend'. We have to call them that otherwise we will be killed for not respecting their wish. They enforce their form of justice with the machine-gun. Hunger has begun to slowly creep up on us. Under the heat of the hot April sun my young relatives and Lay's nephew and nieces are unhappy and misbehaving. The lack of water does not help the situation especially for the young children. They cry for food and drink and also because of their fear. They are becoming ill in these difficult conditions living on the roadside. My own clothes smell and my feet are sore and blistering. I am so angry and frustrated. I cannot understand



Khmer Rouge soldier in Phnom Penh 1975

Killed for not respecting their wish

why they, the Khmer Rouge, are forcing us into this situation? Do they want to kill us all? Is this like another Nazi regime? As another day passes by, we have to fight again for a place to sleep for the night on the road. My brothers are not too bothered where they sleep, but they are kind and want to care for us girls and try their best to be near us, to guard us. Although everyone was in a poor physical state and without strength, I see how much they care and love us girls. I cannot stop myself from crying in secret. When I need to go the toilet at night, I have to wake my brothers to go with me. We walk carefully or otherwise we will step on people on the way out and back to our space. Most of the night I see my mother is awake and I know how much she is worried. I wish that day will come quickly, but then I know I will face another day of frustration, anger, hunger and sadness. I wish and pray to find a way out. It is easy to say a prayer even though I do know to whom I am praying. Somehow I think there must be a God who can see all things in the universe and is in control of my life. ☘

Posts In Cambodia

We need teachers for the **Dental Faculty English teaching programme**. If this is something you might be able to do for a least an academic term then contact Geoff Collett g.collett@saocambodia.org



Does your employer run a Payroll giving scheme already? Why not set up a regular donation to SAO Cambodia though this route? Some employers will match the giving you make to major charities, maybe you could convince them to add SAO Cambodia to their list.

Does your employer have less than 500 employees and not yet run a payroll-giving scheme? Why not persuade them to set one up. We will all be better off!

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All the information for you and your employer can be found at <http://www.payrollgiving.grants>.

Cambodia News

Compiled by John Heard from various reports



Khmer Rouge Trials

Money has now been received to fund the long delayed Khmer Rouge trials for a “sustained period of time”, the UN said. Out of the US\$38m total pledged, Cambodia has allocated US\$13m and the European Commission US\$1.3m. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged Cambodia to move fast to try the Khmer Rouge leaders for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Economy

The World Bank has predicted that Cambodia’s economy is unlikely to grow more than 2.6 percent in 2005 because of competition in garments from China and other countries supplying western markets. Weak growth in agriculture is another economic disappointment, despite expected surges in tourism and construction.

Democracy?

Cambodia’s opposition leader, Sam Rainsy, left the country in February after the National Assembly voted to withdraw his immunity, exposing him to risk of prosecution. Peter Leuprecht, a United Nations human rights envoy, warned that Cambodia is becoming increasingly autocratic and that democracy is a facade.

Bird Flu

An eight-year old Cambodian girl and a twenty-year old lady have died from bird flu, becoming the third and fourth victims of the deadly virus. The H5N1 virus has killed

36 in Vietnam and 12 in Thailand since December 2003. World health experts have warned that the virus could easily mutate, leading to a pandemic. Meanwhile villagers are reluctant to have their birds culled.

Drugs

A US report says Cambodia is serving as a transit route for heroin with estimates of 10 to 20 kilograms trafficked through Cambodia daily. Marijuana is another threat, with estimates of 1,000 tons production annually, while cannabis seizures in recent years indicate that Europe is the major destination. There has also been an increase in amphetamine-type stimulants from the Golden Triangle. The report blamed the surge in drug-related crimes on weak laws, badly resourced enforcement and low penalties. A sixteen-year old Australian has been sentenced to 13 years in jail for trafficking heroin.

Child Abuse

Sexual abuse and beating of children are the most common areas of violence that children experience here, said Glenn Miles, who prepared a study for Tearfund, the British-based Christian group. 1,314 children aged 12 to 15 were interviewed. “Half the boys and 36 percent of the girls said they were beaten by parents, while 35 percent of the boys and a quarter of the girls said they were beaten by their teachers as discipline”.

Mass Grave Privatisation

Cambodia has privatised a mass grave

where thousands of Pol Pot’s political enemies were clubbed to death. A Japanese company has signed a 30-year deal to manage the Cheoung Ek “Killing Fields” genocide memorial on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. The company will plant trees and flowers at the site, home to a memorial tower of 8,000 skulls, as well as build visitor facilities. A spokesman said “This project will benefit tourism as some tourists do not just want to visit our historic temples”. Relatives say the 1.7 million victims are being traded for profit.



The Cheoung Ek memorial

Adoptions

Britain’s indefinite ban on the adoption of Cambodian children is being challenged as heavy handed and unlawful in London’s High Court by six couples in the process of adopting when the ban was imposed.

Pesticides

In the absence of laws, Cambodia has become an open market for toxic pesticides, posing serious risks for health, the environment and trade. 🇰🇲