

VISION

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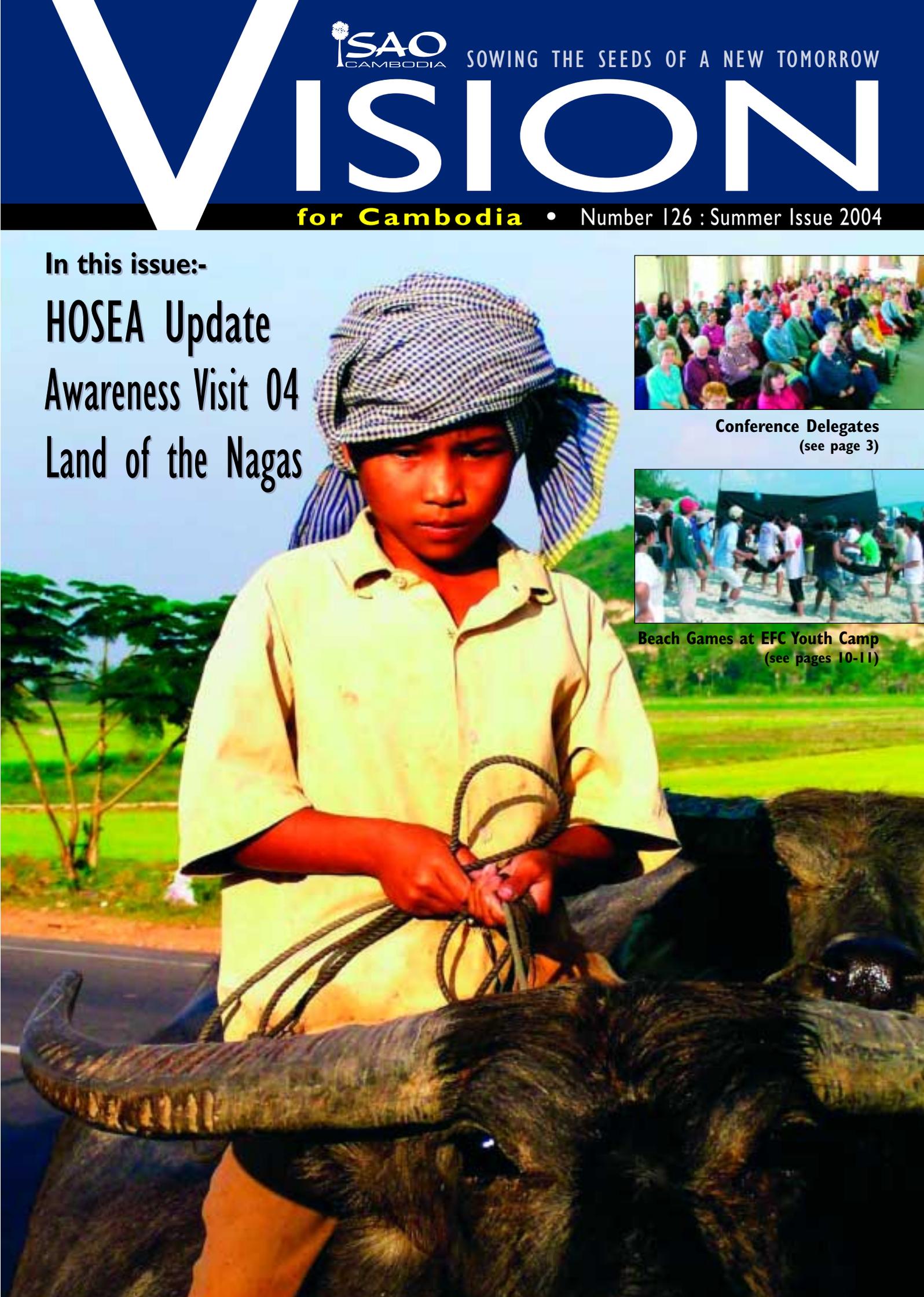
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SAO Cambodia

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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.

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

Editorial:

It is always a joy to go to Cambodia and see all that has taken place since the previous visit. The occasion for me this time was the May meeting of the ICC Board and then joining ICC staff on their annual team retreat. I had plenty of opportunity to discover the huge commitment the team make to their tasks and their desire to help the Cambodian people to come into and develop a relationship with Christ. Of equal joy though is the time I spent meeting up with Khmer Christian friends, their commitment to reaching out to their neighbours, often in the face of adversity or even hostility, is a shining example to us all.

Geoff Collett

New Trustee - Denzil Jarvis

I'm not sure new is correct. Denzil has already served on the Council of SAO Cambodia from 1991-97. As Chair of Trustee, she was in the hot seat through some of our most challenging years.



Denzil (right) with Jacqui Heasman at a cafe on the way to Anlong Veng

Denzil started from a social work background, moved on to a marketing and communications consultant/trainer and training administrator. She has worked in the private and public sectors and with charities. Her current employment is with the NHS. Her home church is Greenford Baptist Church in West London.

So welcome back Denzil, we look forward to having you along side us and benefiting from your wise counsel once again. ❤️

ICC says farewell to Director Willem van Dis

At our May ICC Board meeting, Geoff Collett and the other Board members from (Interact, World Concern, SIL and Danmission), said farewell to Willem and Mieke van Dis and thanked them for four sacrificial years of service. Willem and his family have ministered to ICC through difficult times, as the five partners sought to merge their field operations and administration. Willem leaves for the Netherlands at the end of June, relinquishing his duties with ICC at the end of May. Pray for him as he seeks new employment and for the family as they settle back into life in Holland.



Willem receives a parting gift

Pray too for ICC as we seek to fill the vacant post and for Susanne Madson holding the fort as Interim Field Director. ❤️

Front Cover Main Photo: courtesy Nigel Goddard

SAO CONFERENCE 2004

The 30th Anniversary SAO Conference was held at the Wycliffe Centre near High Wycombe. Nearly one hundred folk participated and it was good to have a number of Cambodians amongst us, plenty of old friends and some new faces too. The meetings were blessed by the ministry of Rev Peter Lewis, speaking from Revelation on the 'Unequaled Christ' and presentations by Hery and Susie and Jez and Jacqui Heasman on furlough from Cambodia. It was good to recognise too the contribution that John and Valerie Heard have made to SAO Cambodia and the Cambodian people over the past twenty years with contributions and comments from friends and colleagues. We presented John with a palmtop computer, Valerie with olive tree and them both with money for a holiday as a token of appreciation.



experience. At times, it was also very moving.

This was a first SAO Cambodia conference for my wife and I, and one of the things that I became aware of was a sense of family among those present. This was revealed by a depth of love and care for one another. This is a very supportive family.

tears were never far away

Alongside this was also evidence of a very deep feeling for Cambodia and its people. Tears were never far away when there was the sharing of things related to the needs of the people, and of how God had touched the heart with a concern for Cambodia - an indication of that depth of commitment that the Lord brings about - a commitment to pray, to support, and often to go. Many of the conference participants evidently shared this - and were visibly moved as they spoke or just listened.

For me, one of the unforgettable moments of this weekend was the video shown by Sokhon Hong on the Saturday evening. This documented her return to Cambodia for the first time, at the request of her daughter who wanted to make the video as part of her University course work. This had not been an easy experience

for Sokhon. However, she told me that the process of facing her fears as she went back to her home village, to meet people she had known during the Pol Pot period, had helped her along in the healing process.

A session run by 'The Ragamuffin Project' in the Saturday afternoon highlighted for me the deep pain felt by many Cambodians because of what happened there. We were helped to understand a little better just how hard it could be for a traumatised person to relate to others in a manner we would call normal.

Pre-breakfast times of prayer each morning were a vital part of the conference. On the last day, those who would be going out to serve in Cambodia sat in the centre of the circle. This had the effect of highlighting their calling, as well as their vulnerability, as we prayed specifically for them in their preparation to go in Jesus' name. God is at work in Cambodia. Yet I have been reminded of the urgent instruction of the Lord Jesus: *"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."*

(Matthew 9,38)



John on the recent Awareness visit

Let's hear from one of the delegates their view of the weekend

A Delegates View

Patrick Manson (a regular visitor to the Verners in Cambodia)

A whole weekend mingling with people who have a serious interest in Cambodia! For me, this was a stimulating and encouraging

Update on HOSEA - its work and its staff

The HOSEA Project is built on four main components: **Networking and Advocacy, Caregiver Training, Children's Workshops, and Research.** Over the past three years, HOSEA team members have been ensuring that the needs identified by the child-care facilities are met, and each year, we have seen these activities grow in number and effectiveness, for which we all praise God.



Hosea staff members, Dara, Phearrith, Sarah and Deth.

Looking back:

2001 - 105 caregivers trained
43 organisations involved
978 children & young people benefited

2002 - 102 caregivers trained
66 organisations involved
1214 children & young people benefited

2003 - 741 caregivers trained
128 organisations involved
4310 children and young people benefited

During this year, HOSEA has been able to undertake activities covering all four of our components, so it has been an exciting time for the HOSEA team. Here is an update on previous reports in Vision 123.

Networking and Advocacy

HOSEA continues to join and strengthen the various child welfare networking groups. At the beginning of the year, Viva Network held a regional conference in Malaysia for leaders of Christian ministries to children. HOSEA sent two of the team to attend.

HOSEA represents the Child



Caregiver learns resuscitation

Why are we doing it?

Dara works for the HOSEA project as and Administrative assistant and bookkeeper. He had polio as a child and finds walking difficult.

Dara says...

At the end of 2003 we successfully prepared a Child Rights Workshop. Caregivers from 24 Provinces and cities and 70 caregivers from 44 alternative child care centers in Phnom Penh and Kandal Province came, two were Buddhist monks.

We smiled, laughed, ate and learned together during 3 days and were pleased when the pre test and post test clearly showed that the improvement in peoples' understanding. Now we are preparing a five month long course on HIV/AIDS, testing, transmission, protection first aid, child development, hygiene and nutrition as well as caring for people with AIDS.



Monks at the Workshop

Why does HOSEA do this job? This is the one question people are always asking, because they know we are providing many valuable contributions to communities and to children at risk. We always answer because we are Christians and we ask our Lord for what we need to do this job.

For me... I am happy with my work and my life today. Because I have a living and can get around and function in my role although the world wasn't designed to accommodate "my kind."

Welfare Group on the Minimum Standards Committee, alongside representatives from the Government and big organisations such as UNICEF. This has led to an opportunity to continue in direct advocacy, as HOSEA has been invited onto the Government's Advisory Committee for

Alternative Care.

Caregiver Training

Following the success of last year's HIV/AIDS Training Course for Caregivers, HOSEA decided to repeat the workshop. This year there are 22 participants from 14

different facilities, including a Government run orphanage. Presenters on the course are mainly Khmer and mainly Christians.

A new initiative is a Proposal and Report Writing course, which HOSEA is sponsoring 25 facility administrators and directors to attend.

Children's workshop

The Children's workshop was arranged by HOSEA and was attended by the Mission Awareness 2004 team who led the activities. It is part of a growing opportunity to do direct children's work now that relationships are established with the Child care community.

Many children live at the Phnom Penh municipal dump. This is a dangerous place of heaped rubbish, decomposing scraps, the gnarled and twisted bones of broken machinery sharing a home with discarded medical waste and huge shards of broken glass. The intense heat of the Cambodian sun, the overwhelming smell and the clouds of flies humming over mounds of waste make this inhospitable terrain generally a place to be avoided.

But hundreds of people call it home. Everyday children and their families can be seen climbing over the piles of rubbish, stick in one hand, rice sack in the other, picking through the refuse trying to salvage items that can be recycled, resold, reused or eaten. Children who would love the opportunity to go to school must forgo the privilege, and run the daily risk of serious injury and infection to make a few pence so their families can survive.

There are places of refuge for them during the day, facilities where they

Phearith says "I am a support worker in the Project and really like my work here. I enjoy the way that HOSEA does team building because we can deepen relationship with one another as well as have fun. This is one of the factors that lead us to be good at networking and successful in our work. I do not forget that the Lord our God always shows us the best way."

can rest out of the blazing sun, their cuts and infections tended to. Places where they can shower, eat and learn to read and write. Places where they can play and be children, where they can be unburdened from the adult world they've been forced into far too early. HOSEA helps two such facilities by training caregivers, and by providing fun activities to encourage networking and friendship building between children and caregivers.

Forty children stepped out of the minibus in their best clothes, one in a thick, purple ski jacket, and another in an older brother's school uniform. They shuffled into the Church hall, completely silent, wary, untrusting. The burst of colour from the parachute lying on the floor sparked interest and it was not long before the adult-like masks gave way to 6 year old squeals of pleasure and 12 year old grins as the unfamiliar game got underway, and broke the ice.

Deth says "I am the Khmer counterpart for Sarah, who manages the project. I am also a mother. What does being a mother mean to me? Sometimes I feel sad, sometimes proud, sometimes I work hard and sometimes I have fun with my little son Matthew. He is our first son and a so I can say he is a wonderful gift from God to Graham and me. Matthew smiles his lovely smile most of the time and all my problems go and enemies and strangers become friends."

The room filled with laughing children, colouring, modelling, playing, shouting, singing, smiling together in the knowledge that this was a safe place, with safe people. Orphans, street children, children with HIV and children with backgrounds of extreme poverty played harmoniously for the entire afternoon, making things that they had never had the opportunity to see before, let alone play with - puppets, paper games, play-dough models, musical instruments.

Little goodie bags of fruit, snacks and bottles of water were handed out by HOSEA during the break. Despite the tell-tale signs of borderline



Caregivers at the Hosea Child Rights Workshop

malnutrition and hunger, most of the children took a peek inside the bag and then tied the handles together without touching the contents. Slightly worried, HOSEA team members sat next to a little girl of 8 for a quiet, break-time chat. The snacks are great, she reported. 'I'm taking mine home for my mummy - I know she hasn't eaten anything today.'

Research

HOSEA has been conducting a survey to discover the level and quality of child-care given by monks in temples located in rural communities. This has been with a view to modifying HOSEA's current workshops and training courses to offer to the monks as caregivers. The research has proved popular with the monks and temple priests, who are overwhelmed that a Christian project is seeking to help them do a better job, and the positive relationships formed have led to interesting conversations.

Looking forward, there are many more activities planned for the rest of the year, including a Parenting Skills Training Course, a Drugs Awareness workshop, an HIV/AIDS workshop for monks, re-recording songs about good health and nutrition on a CD for children, another Social Activity Afternoon for children at risk, more retreats with The Ragamuffin Project and more networking and advocacy. For this HOSEA will be recruiting two more team members to join us.

Praise God with us for all the ways He has used HOSEA for His glory, and join us in prayers for the team, and all the planned activities. 🙏

Sarah chhin

Reflections on Awareness

Tim Martindale (Godmanchester)

I look back with very fond memories of a few days in the sun in Cambodia last February. It was warm in every way; the temperature was never less than 30 degrees (even at night!) but more memorable was the warm reception from our hosts and indeed everyone who met us with smiles, generosity and hospitality.



Arriving alone after the rest of the team, I was confronted by the grimaces of the guards and officials at passport control in Phnom Penh Airport. I was relieved to be met by the friendly smile of Pola. Pola is the husband of Sarah, the Manager of the HOSEA project (see also page 9). Pola is a Khmer and speaks as much English as I do Khmer! And Pola was to be my guide for the day! And an excellent guide he was for a wonderful introduction to Cambodia. The lack of a common verbal language was completely surpassed by Pola's friendly welcome and enthusiasm to help me see Phnom Penh. From the extravagance of Sihanouk's gold plated, silver floored palace to the poverty of the cardboard shantytown next door and from the elevated Wat Phnom to the depths of human depravity at Tuol Sleng; a former Khmer Rouge prison.

We had a look behind... to the heart of the Khmer

Pola's father had been a General in Lon Nol's Army. He was born into a happy family with a comfortable home in Phnom Penh. After his father resigned from the Army they went back to his father's village in the province of Kratie, where there was work at a rubber plantation. Pola's father died following the move and then after Pol Pot came to power the family was completely broken up.

In 1979 Pol Pot was deposed and Pola, with his mother and one brother, returned to Phnom Penh. The family home had gone and they had to live as best they could, but 5 brothers and 3 sisters had miraculously survived. 2 brothers and 14 nieces and nephews were not so fortunate.

As we met and talked to the Khmer nationals in SAO/ICC, the Church and those we met in the projects, we realised that Pola's story was not exceptional amongst those that have lived through the recent troubled times. This is what lies just beneath the surface and behind the welcoming, warm and hospitable smiles. I am sure the returning tourists will not see this as they soak up the warm sun and exotic sites and sample the Khmer cuisine in the myriad of excellent restaurants across the bustling city. We felt humbled and privileged to have had a peak behind the mask to the heart of the Khmer people. We pray that the work of SAO/ICC will continue in the many excellent projects which we saw, to bring hope and healing to a wonderful Country and its people.

Roz Johnson (Bawtry)
Highly recommended, taken at a trot, there's so much to see, so



laughing, smiling faces from children with next to nothing

many people to meet and so little time to do it in. The schedule was a miracle of forward planning and day to day flexibility! We had many laughs and lots of more thoughtful times. It is impossible to decide what the most special times were. One of the best for me was being with the street children - playing games and crafts with them with the HOSEA people. Their laughing, smiling faces and openness were wonderful - and from children that had next to nothing. We would all have liked to spend more time with them. One other was the visit to the SPPA projects to see the micro-enterprises in the villages where they are making granulated sugar, soy sauce, futons, and other sewing projects. The industry of the workers and the imagination and persistence of the team were impressive.

An excerpt from my journal at the end of the trip sums up most of it for me.
'This has been one of the most wonderful /tiring /emotional /encouraging /frustrating /funny /challenging two weeks



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of my life. The contrasts of dirt/dust, rich and poor, old and modern, decrepit, shanty and ornate palaces, city bustle and village life, freedom and captivity, the bizarre and 'off the wall' all need a lot of processing in my mind. The wonderful hospitality and patience of our hosts, the smiling people; the chaotic traffic, lack of road rage; continuous pipping of horns; traffic just flowing slowly around you while you steadily progress across the road - all these are lasting impressions. Also the amazing progress made by the mission staff in difficult circumstances - all due to God's abundant grace and their hard work, commitment and sense of humour.'

Rev. Peter Warren (Blackpool)

I had been looking forward to actually going to Cambodia for a long time but as we flew into Phnom Penh, I realised that I was completely outside my comfort zone! For a few minutes I was anxious as I saw the shanty town houses and the dusty scenery. However as we landed there was a great sense of anticipation and excitement. This was going to be a

a young and vibrant church

very special experience!

John Heard told us to make the most of the initial impact of Cambodia as we travelled from the airport. We would never again come to Cambodia for the first time. Sights, sounds and smells(!) overwhelmed our senses. ...motos with up to five on board, life, activity, people everywhere, vibrant colour, food stalls, dust and heat.

Over the next two weeks we gained a wonderful and priceless insight into Cambodia. Special memories included flying in the tiny MAF plane to the remote areas; seeing a united international team at Mondulkiri; understanding some of the joys and challenges of mission life with Jez and Jacqui Heasman in Ratanakiri; and experiencing a country open to the good news of Jesus, with a young and vibrant church that seeks to minister to both body and soul. We met so many wonderful Cambodian

Christians - ordinary people who are making a real difference. For one afternoon the Mission Awareness team helped run activities for local children who 'work' on the rubbish tips of

Phnom Penh. It was a privilege for us to be involved and help with the ongoing work of HOSEA. It was clearly a very special occasion for the children, who were a joy to be with. The event was a great success for the children and all the leaders and helpers. As the bus took the children home, I reflected that there was a bus full of special souls.

We saw so many different things on the trip and it really was a life changing experience. My perspective has been broadened as I have seen God at work in new and different ways in His world.

One sight seemed to sum up so much. After the SAO trip I stayed on for two weeks to meet

fragility, the resilience, the humour

Cambodian Christians who had lived through the Khmer Rouge years. On my travels I saw a small boy floating on a metal bowl in the middle of the vast Tonle Sap Lake! He looked quite contented too! That little boy summed up the fragility, the resilience, the humour and the sheer miracle that makes Cambodia such an amazing place.



I came back from Cambodia wondering when I would return and hoping that it wouldn't be too long! Thank you John Heard and SAO Cambodia for making Cambodia become a reality for us.



SO HOW ABOUT YOU?

- Do you want to be able to pray with first hand experience of the country?
- Are you interested to see what God is doing through the Mission and in the Church?
- Do you want to give the Mission workers a word of encouragement?
- Do you want to move out of your comfort zone?
- Do you wonder if God is calling you?

Why not come and find out for yourself on a Mission Awareness visit. Contact Elaine at the office for information about future trips.

From Nagaland to the land of the Nagas*

Rev Wati Longkumer

*Rev Wati Longkumer and his family are from Nagaland India. He is presently the Dean of Academics at PPBS (the **Phnom Penh Bible School**). They have been sent to Cambodia by their home mission Board, the Nagaland Missionary Movement, in partnership with the Hong Kong Baptist Church. He received his theological training in India (BA & BD) and Singapore (M.Th. Biblical Studies). Wati is married to Arenla and they have two boys Chizuk (7 years) and Longsen Luka (4 years). He has taught at PPBS since February 1996. He is now preparing to come to the UK for further study at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.*

He will conduct research on the history of the Cambodian Church, a subject where very little research has been done so far. He hopes that his study will further equip him to help the fledgling Cambodian Church.



The Longkumer family

Wati's Call

In the summer of 1995, while studying at Trinity Theological College in Singapore I received a fax from a Baptist Pastor in Hong Kong whom I did not know. The content of the fax and the subsequent meeting with him was to change the course of my ministry. He said that he had come to know of my call to Cambodia and knew of a mission opportunity there. Would I like to meet him?



Phnom Penh Bible School

When we met a few weeks later he told me of their search for teachers for what was then the only Bible School in Cambodia - the Phnom Penh Bible School - of which he chaired the Board. For me this was an answer to prayer and confirmation that God wanted me there.

A year earlier I had begun praying for mission opportunities in Cambodia with the specific request that the Lord would open doors for a teaching ministry. But inquiries to missionaries on the field had gone unanswered. I was losing hope. But God does work wonders! Here I was, meeting a person who heard about my vision from a fourth person in a chain. A friend

of mine told her friend in HK who told her friend and she told her Pastor. Now he was inviting me to come teach at PPBS!

In Cambodia at last

By September 1995 I visited PPBS on an introductory trip and by the end of February 1996 I was living in Phnom Penh and beginning my nine years of ministry.

Besides his responsibilities at PPBS Wati is also the Co-Coordinator for NETCLIK (Network for Education and Training of Christian Leaders In Kampuchea), a network of organisations conducting or supporting Christian Leadership training in Cambodia, which SAO Cambodia attends. A further responsibility is as Chair of the Cambodia Cassette Bible Institute, a training programme spearheaded by FEBC to take the Bible to the villages.

Phnom Penh Bible School:

To meet the urgent pastoral needs of the Church in Cambodia, PPBS was established in 1992 by the Country Network, a non-denominational organisation that networks with other mission minded agencies to support Christian leadership training in Asia. It offers a three year tertiary Diploma in Christian Ministry. To date 146 students have graduated many of whom are now in key leadership positions in the Church in Cambodia. PPBS has a current enrolment of 75 students. The fulltime faculties are drawn from five countries and are assisted by a pool of visiting national and expatriate teachers.



Small Bible group

*If you are wondering what a Naga is, it is the mythical multi headed snake of Cambodia whose image appears at many of their historical and religious sites.

Chat from the Chhins

Sarah is leading the HOSEA child caregivers support project and Pola is her Khmer husband and an SAO Cambodia affiliate.

10 things we miss from England

- hot water on tap
- regular dustbin men
- washing machines
- lie-ins
- the cold (Pola!)
- drinkable tap water
- small spiders
- reliable electricity
- mouse traps
- ant free sugar

10 essentials in our house

- mouse glue
- barred windows
- Tiger Balm
- communal flip flops in the bathroom
- surge protector
- toothpicks
- toilet-side water squirter
- 6m long cobweb duster
- mosquito coils
- water filter

Meet Pola...

I interviewed Pola so that you can all get to know him a bit!

What is your full name?

My name is Chhin Pola - Chhin is my family name.

When were you born?

I'm not really sure, but in my passport it says 1st March 1969.

What is your occupation?

I have my own ministry serving people who are called by God to work in Cambodia - I want to help them have good experiences in Cambodia, so that they can work for God more effectively. I offer them services as a Private Contractor - finding houses, renovating and building houses, making furniture, maintenance work and being a taxi driver. I especially like carpentry because it's like sport - you work up a sweat!

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy playing sport, especially football, volleyball and ping pong. Every Tuesday I play football with a group of foreigners. I also like listening to music and reading my Bible.

What's your favourite food?

People aren't going to be interested in that! I like to eat anything as long as it has meat with it!

What was your best experience in England?

I appreciated the way people



Sarah and Pola

respect each other and liked meeting Christians who welcomed me as a brother. I also enjoyed learning how to live as a family in England.

What was your least enjoyable experience in England?

Walking for long distances, because I get a bad back.

What was the most surprising thing you saw in England?

The way women kiss men when they meet and also people who pierce their eyebrows, tongues and belly buttons - why do they do that?

What makes you happy?

I always thank God that He has given me a wonderful wife and that I have been able to visit her country. It was great to see that we really are all one big family. As an orphan that makes me really excited. ❤️

All things bright and beautiful...

Our house has a lovely garden, home to many wonderful creatures, not least Rocky, our scatty dog. These animals are fine, as long as they stay outside!

When the rainy season begins, it means an end to peaceful sleep! After a long and heavy downpour, the whole garden becomes a big bog, and all the frogs have a party! Frogs and toads of all shapes and sizes have competitions on who can croak the loudest, and adding that to the sounds of crickets and cicadas, sleep becomes elusive. The frog chorus can be amusing though - one of the toads croaks, 'Ha haa, ha haa!' every night!

Rocky is part forest dog, and any other animals in our garden are fair game for him to seek and destroy. Woe betide any poor frog who dares to hop across the drive! But this skill has its advantages, especially when he hunts down large rats. He's also taken to sniffing out mice, which live in the kitchen and run around our lounge - really, very helpful.

After one storm, we were delighted to find a baby python sunning itself on a bush. Our next door neighbour found the mother python in their yard, wrapped around their prize fighting cockerel! It was over 2m long and

very beautiful - the neighbours let it eat the cockerel, and then decided to take advantage of the Cambodian belief that pythons are lucky, and sold it for a large sum of money!

As I said, it's fine when the animals are outside - this means they also come inside. One Saturday morning, we were up late and expecting guests, so ran around madly getting ready. It wasn't until we were entertaining that I spied a huge, male crab climbing up the lounge curtains! Don't you just hate it when that happens?! ❤️

EFC Youth Camp Fulfilling

Brian Maher

Brian, who has previously written for us about the Cambodian Church, spends most days working for the EFC's Youth Commission and is a colleague of our own Graham Symons. He has lived with his family in Phnom Penh since 1994.

Neh 6:16; ".....this work had been done with the help of our God."

Todd Smith, an advisor (from CMS NZ) to the EFC Youth Commission, and I were standing watching 320 young Christian leaders taking part in lunch time games at the Youth Commission's 9th Annual Youth Leaders' Conference. Todd, there to teach a workshop on principles of biblical leadership, said: "So Brian, you've fulfilled your vision for Cambodian youth. No other Cambodian youth camps come close to the quality you provide here."



Todd Smith leading a workshop

It was true in some sense. My vision of seeing **Mr. Uon Seila** come on as a full time co-director was especially rewarding.

Later I looked out over the 375 people worshipping God, and realized that my vision is only

partially fulfilled. I rejoiced that each year we could give this many young people an experience they will never forget, preparing them to demonstrate Christian maturity, unity and leadership in their communities. However, I lamented the fact that we could only focus on those with leadership potential due to lack of resources. My vision is to purchase land in Sihanoukville where there could be year round training and teaching.

More than one person asked me; "Brian, you don't look as stressed as you have before just before the Youth Conference." Any stress I may have had was coming from having my wife Debbi in Thailand for a thyroid operation while I looked after our three kids. For the first time I did not accompany Seila a day early to set up. He had two punctures on my

pick up and then the radiator began to leak - business as usual!

I wasn't that stressed because it was clear that the funds had almost all come in, and because the Youth Commission, and the many volunteers who have helped for quite a few years are now quite competent.

The buses arrived a bit late, and all 320 campers and 70 helpers disembarked onto the grounds of the CCS Hotel. After a hilarious orientation for the campers by Seila, he slept the rest of Monday and into

Tuesday, exhausted from months of activity. Camp Directors, Dr. Tevynneath, Pastor Runnath Nara, Youth Pastor Seng Vitol, and I, picked up the slack.

After the evening meal, Pastor Mam Barnabas opened the



Conference Leaders

conference, summarizing the theme of "Youth Fulfilling Vision" through the book of Nehemiah. We are helping the Youth to understand how vision evolves and we can work along with God to see it unfold. How did the process of Nehemiah's vision unfold? What kind of person was he that God gave him a special vision? Was the fact that he was an advisor to the Persian King a coincidence? He wasn't a pastor, nor a priest; does God use lay people to do great things? Well, these young people would find out.

Nehemiah fulfilled the vision God gave him

We ran workshops, led by

WORKSHOP CHOICES:

Level A - for new Christians

- Life Decisions & Planning
- Introduction to Sexual Awareness
- How to understand your Bible
- The Value of Women to the church
- Christian Response to HIV/AIDS
- Coping with Stress & Trauma
- Reaching Out to Youth in Crisis
- Biblical Principles of Leadership

Level B - for the more mature

- Youth Fulfilling Vision
- Interactive Bible Teaching Methods
- Khmer Bible Translations
- Problem of Pain & Suffering

a Vision

Cambodians and expatriates, to help youth awareness of the social issues plaguing Cambodian and to give them some tools to respond biblically. Other workshops encouraged the camper's own personal spiritual growth, and prepared them for leadership in their churches.

The dynamics of this are interesting; Christian expatriates who are community development professionals; missionaries; five former campers who are now in 'full time Christian Service' and 2 or 3 experienced Cambodian pastors, only one of whom has had any formal Bible training. These older pastors, with experience of depending on God through many trials and persecutions, have a lot to teach the Youth. The youth camps are not for young people who want to be pastors. There are many Bible Schools in Phnom Penh for that. We want to train

*workshops
that touched
my heart*



Youth Conference participants

youth to be salt and light as professionals; teachers, lawyers, businessmen, farmers or wherever God places them among the ebb and flow of life in the Cambodian community.

This year, 80% of the campers

came from the provinces, many from very poor families. With Cambodians having an average annual income of \$300 per year, it is exciting to see that young people come up with money, and unfortunately, each year we are forced to turn many away. ❤️

The Last Word

"Hello, my name is Boravuth, also called Benjamin. I am the worship leader of the New Life Church and the leader of a youth group. I have been a believer for two years and came to Christ through the witness of a close friend. In this camp, one the messages that touched my heart the most was a sermon given by Pastor Mam Barnabas, who spoke on the story of Nehemiah. He just did not go out at once to accomplish his vision but waited for God's leading and timing. Despite people laughing and making fun of him, Nehemiah was victorious in fulfilling the vision that God gave him.

A workshop that really touched my heart was 'Reaching Out to Youth in Crisis'. They gave us very specific examples of how to reach unbelieving

young people. Another workshop that was valuable was Introduction to Sexual Awareness. It encouraged us young people to remain pure until we get married. Our culture is now changing, it is becoming acceptable to date and have girlfriends. It also encouraged us to remain faithful to our spouse when we do get married, rather than take another wife, have a girlfriend, or to visit prostitutes.

The games we played on the beach were so much fun. There was one game where teams threw and caught water balloons in Kramas (scarves) over a covered volley ball net. We had to use the Krama not only to catch the water balloon, but also to throw it back over the covered net! (see also front cover)

This was my first time attending, and



Beach games

although it was pretty intense and tiring, I loved every part of the camp. I plan to take these ideas and use them with my youth group. I will also apply the lessons learned to my own life and that of my church's youth group. Please pray for me as I would like to return again next year for more fun and new ideas." ❤️

Cambodia News

Compiled by John Heard from various sources

Government Stalemate

No party managed to achieve the required majority following the July 2003 election and there has been no constitutional government since. But the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has proposed a two-party coalition government with FUNCINPEC under a 55-45 plan, with members of the Sam Rainsy Party joining within the FUNCINPEC framework. The CPP won 73 seats, FUNCINPEC 26 and Sam Rainsy 24. There have been protracted discussions between the party leaders – Prince Ranariddh (FUNCINPEC), Sam Rainsy and Hun Sen (CPP) – on the terms of the coalition. Meanwhile CPP, with Hun Sen as Prime Minister, continues to govern unconstitutionally. In May there were early signs of a possible breakthrough

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

WTO countries have given Cambodia an extension from March until September to complete constitutional parliamentary ratification of the agreed entry terms. But the political deadlock must be solved first.



Market Economy

Cambodia is aiming to achieve a genuine market economy. Assuming final accession into WTO, the country is expecting growing overseas markets for its

products, garments in particular. The target is to turn one of the world's least-developed countries from depending on foreign aid into one benefiting from foreign investment.

Garment Factories

The garment industry employs 230,000 workers and in 2003 accounted for \$1.5 billion, the majority of Cambodia's export earnings. Factories have made wage improvements but still have problems with forced overtime, the UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) said after inspecting 62 of the country's 200 factories.

Khmer Rouge Trials

Preparations for a tribunal to try the ageing leaders of the Khmer Rouge for crimes against humanity are delayed. Cambodia and the UN agreed to create a special court but this still needs approval by Cambodia's National Assembly, which cannot yet happen because of the political deadlock. No Khmer Rouge leader has faced justice for the 2 million people who died in the "Killing Fields," many of them tortured and executed, others dying of starvation, disease or overwork.

Those likely to be indicted include Ieng Sary, a former deputy prime minister, and his wife, Khieu Thirith; Khieu Samphan, a former president; Nuon Chea, a former top leader; Ta Mok, a former military commander; and Kang Kek Ieu, a former torture prison commander known as Comrade Deuch, the latter having given his life to Jesus in recent years. Meanwhile, Khieu Samphan, has recently published memoirs in which he denies taking part in the mass killings, saying his role was ceremonial. Pol Pot, the top Khmer Rouge leader, died in 1998.



Poverty Reduction Failure

In 2000, Cambodia, together with the majority of UN member states, adopted a Millennium Development Goal to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender discrimination. But Prime Minister Hun Sen admitted his government was failing to reduce poverty.

Mekong River damming

Along parts of its length, one of the world's great rivers has been reduced to a fraction of its former flow by Chinese dams and engineering works. The Mekong starts in the Tibetan plateau and flows through China, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The dams are likely to seriously affect Cambodia, where annual floods create the world's fourth largest catch of freshwater fish and work for 1.5 million people. Cambodia catches 400,000 tonnes of freshwater fish a year, behind only China, India, and Bangladesh.

Riot Aftermath

Thai officials moved back into their embassy in Phnom Penh just over a year after a nationalist mob burnt the building following unfounded rumours of Thai claims of ownership of the Angkor Wat temples, Cambodia's symbol of national pride.

Terrorism Suspects

A court dismissed terrorism charges against four foreigners and a Cambodian accused of belonging to the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network. 🇰🇲