



Bringing news of Cambodia and Cambodian Communities out of Crisis

December 2004

The Changing Face of Cambodia

In October this year CCC Director Rev Ross Rennie visited Cambodia with his wife Jackie and children Daniel and Hannah-May. There had been a gap of two years since Ross's previous visit and he observed a number of changes. In the first of two articles he reflects on what he saw.

As soon as I arrived in Phnom Penh I began to notice some of the vast differences from the last time I was there in 2002:

- the redevelopment of the airport completed;
- major building projects;
- new traffic signals and central reservations on the roads installed in an attempt to regulate increasing volumes of traffic.

But one characteristic of Cambodian society was still the same: the lack of parity between the rich and poor – in fact the gap seems to be widening still more.



No traffic lights needed here

How will the increasing prosperity of Phnom Penh and other cities affect missions and Christian agencies working in Cambodia?

Firstly, the price of land seems to be spiralling out of control, and this could present a major obstacle to organisations wishing to set up operations in the cities. It is certainly of great concern to CCC as we seek to help Ambassadors for Christ Cambodia buy land for Timothy Leadership Centre Cambodia.

Secondly, increasing urban prosperity seems to be having an adverse effect on the Phnom Penh churches.

It was this second phenomenon that really shocked me. As I thought back to my first visit in 1994, when Cambodia was still struggling with the legacy of more than a decade of isolation from the West that followed the toppling of the Khmer Rouge regime, I recalled seeing widespread poverty, people wearing cast-off clothes, and crumbling buildings. Now, as I walked through the six-storey Sorya shopping centre, with its up-market shops, escalators and food court teeming with affluent, smartly dressed young Cambodians, I reflected on the impact of materialism on the younger generation of the church.



Young members of the Living Hope in Christ Church lead the church in worship

Back in 1994 even professional people might have to exist on only \$5 a week. Now, some church leaders informed me, many young people could easily earn \$40 a week. But I heard that this newfound affluence is drawing young people away from the church and away from the great commission.

My observations from the proclamation of the gospel in Phnom Penh are that it is now very difficult to bring people to salvation. In contrast in the provinces there is as great a hunger for the word of God as ever, and both Cambodian churches and foreign missions are spending more of their time working in rural areas.

This is why I believe there is an urgency to build Timothy Leadership Centre Cambodia and enable the senior pastors to equip trainees from the provinces to proclaim the gospel more effectively in the rural areas.

To do this we need your help. Whereas it would have cost \$500,000 to buy land and build Timothy College five years ago, now we and our partners in Ambassadors for Christ Cambodia could require two to three million dollars to see our vision for Timothy College / Timothy Leadership Centre come to fruition.

Each time I visit Cambodia I enjoy sharing fellowship with Rev Heng Cheng, General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia. Rev Cheng told me how greatly he values the work of CCC in helping young Cambodians to receive a good education. But he also encouraged us to keep pursuing our vision for a Christian college and leadership training centre.



Rev Ross Rennie and his family with Rev Heng Cheng, General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia, outside the EFC headquarters

CCC has never asked openly for finance, but now I believe that this is the day, this is the hour, when we need you to give. A great statesman, Winston Churchill, said, **"Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."** If you feel that God is calling you to this work, then now is the time to stand up and be counted.

Contact us using the address, telephone number or email address shown on the back page.

Family Impressions

My first encounter with Cambodia occurred as a very young Christian through reading *Anointed for Burial* in 1983, but I never considered that one day I would be involved in the country as we are today – through the work of CCC. To actually be going to Cambodia filled me with mixed emotions, excitement and apprehension, especially as a mother, not knowing the extent of what we would be faced with. When we arrived at the airport it was already dark and the air was very clammy. Driving through Phnom Penh was a very sur-

prising first experience because everywhere was built up and very busy with traffic: it was not at all as I had imagined. In some ways it was a little like home! God had definitely gone ahead of us and prepared the way concerning how the children adapted, especially regarding food and climate changes.

During our week in Cambodia we visited various people and places, and it was really good to at last be able to put faces to the many names that Ross has talked about during his many trips to this land. In some ways, with this being my first visit, I felt I was intruding on his territory! That was not really the case because he has waited so long for us to be there as a family.

The church really blessed us by transporting us around Cambodia in their mini bus and making arrangements in advance of places to go, people to meet. Much time was spent in Phnom Penh but on a couple of days we visited churches out in the provinces which really was a tremendous time – even the time spent travelling as we drove through small villages and countryside, seeing rice growing in the paddy fields. It was amusing to notice that even in the remote places you could see people in their homes watching TV! When we arrived at the village churches the welcomes we received were overwhelming. Being able to worship Jesus together, in different languages, of one accord was to me the most exciting part of my first visit to Cambodia. **(Jackie)**



Hannah-May and Daniel with Deborah Chhor, a Cambodian friend

It was amazing because it was a different place. I realise it is harder to live in that country because of the floods and water. **(Hannah-May, age 10)**

I really got into the mode of the Cambodian way of life because of two reasons – one, I really enjoyed the food; second, I enjoyed the company of the Cambodian children, especially Vuthy's children. The highlight of the trip was when after church we went to the Sorya shopping centre and ate at the food court with David and the other children. It was great! Also, I enjoyed going to the villages outside Phnom Penh. All of it was an amazing experience and I would love to go again. **(Daniel, age 13)**

A New King for Cambodia

King Norodom Sihanouk announced his abdication on 7 October. Although the constitution stipulates that the king is head of state for life, the Throne Council (the body that chooses a successor when the king dies) was convened. It selected Prince Norodom Sihamoni, eldest son of King Sihanouk and Queen Monineath, to be the next monarch. Sihamoni, a bachelor aged 51, was educated in Czechoslovakia and France, where he trained as a ballet dancer, and he was Cambodia's ambassador to UNESCO from 1992 to 2004. He ascended the throne on 29 October. Sihamoni's father is expected to act as his mentor.

After his enthronement Sihamoni told his people, "Every week, I will devote several days to visiting our towns, our countryside and our provinces, and to serving you."

He promised to remember forever his father's teachings "to be a pure patriot" and "only think of the interest of the homeland, the nation and the people."



CCC's Tithe

The Council of CCC has decided that we should tithe our undesignated income to ministries outside CCC's control or involvement. Money that is given to us for a specific purpose, for example student sponsorship or the purchase of land, is not taken into consideration in calculating the tithe: everything that is given is allocated according to the donor's intentions.

CCC's Declaration of Trust (the legal document that governs our activities as a registered charity) makes provision for us to provide benefit to people outside Cambodia, so we have decided to give our tithe for 2003/4 to a Christian school in Abuja, Nigeria.



Pupils of the Royal School using playground equipment bought with the first instalment of CCC's tithe

Cambodia's Population Growth Slows

Cambodia's population has grown at an annual rate of 1.8% since 1998 to a projected total of 13.6 million in 2004. The population was 11.4 million in 1998, with a recorded annual growth rate of 2.5%. The current rate is far lower than the 2.9% estimated rate projected for the five years following the last census. The slowdown may be a sign that more couples are choosing to have fewer children.

50% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 49, according to the Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2004 General Report, with another 38.8% under the age of 15.

Buy Christmas Presents and Give to CCC at the Same Time

By using UshopUgive's web portal before accessing an online retailer's site, you can make them give to CCC a proportion of what you spend.

- Go to www.ushopugive.com.
- Select **Cambodian Communities out of Crisis** as your chosen charity.
- Select the type of goods or service you want to buy.
- Select a retailer, for example Argos, Amazon or John Lewis.
- You are redirected to your chosen retailer.

If you make a purchase, the retailer sends a percentage of what you spend (typically 5 to 10%) to UshopUgive, who then pay to CCC 50% of the amount they receive from the retailer.

UshopUgive.com
*where retailers give to charity
 when you shop online*

Please Pray!

The Cambodian Prayer Council asks us to pray...

... for the Cambodian church

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Therefore, the local church is the power of God that will bring about change in Cambodia. In Matthew 6:9-10, God's plan is for His Kingdom to be established on earth, and for things on earth to be as it is in heaven.

There are six areas that influence people:

1. government
2. religion
3. education
4. social relationships
5. business
6. entertainment, especially the mass media

Through the church, God can bring change in these six areas of life. God wants Christians working in each of these areas of society.

- Pray for the health of the church.
- Pray for the leaders of the church.
- Pray that God will prepare the church in Cambodia to be influential in each of the six areas above.

... for broadcasting

CBN Cambodia has been established for five years. They air two TV programmes: Super Kids' Club (for children, running for five years) and One Cubed (for young people, started February 2004). God has used the children's programme to change many children's lives across the country. God has blessed CBN Cambodia with free airtime to air their shows, whereas they had to buy airtime before.

1. Pray for the opportunity to use the Name of Jesus over national TV.
2. Pray that churches will pray for every Christian media organisation.
3. Pray for the staff and ministry of CBN Cambodia.
4. Pray for the heads of TV Stations in Cambodia.

The latest prayer requests from the Cambodian Prayer Council can be found on the Prayer page of the CCC web site at www.cambcomm.org.uk.

Give thanks with CCC

We thank the Lord for:

- funds to continue our student sponsorship programme;
- funds coming in to buy land for Timothy Leadership Centre Cambodia;
- our relationship with Pastor Barnabas and our partnership with Ambassadors for Christ Cambodia.

Please Pray for Student Sponsorship

Pray for funds to meet the sponsorship commitments we have made in faith for 2005.

Pray for the students we are sponsoring: for diligence and perseverance in their studies. Ask the Lord to provide for their needs and those of their families.

Pray for discernment in selecting students for sponsorship who are in genuine need.

Timothy Leadership Centre Cambodia

Pray that the Lord would lead Ambassadors for Christ Cambodia to a site that is of the right size, in the right place and for sale at the right price.

Please ask the Lord to provide funds as quickly as possible.

Contact Us	My Response
<p>Cambodian Communities out of Crisis</p> <p>Our Address:</p> <p>PO Box 7591, Loughborough LE12 9WN, United Kingdom</p> <p>Telephone / Fax: +44 (0)1509 507402</p> <p>Email: info@cambcomm.org.uk</p> <p>Web site: www.cambcomm.org.uk</p> <p>Registered Charity number 1062205</p>	<p>Name</p> <p>Address</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Email Telephone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a gift towards the purchase of land for Timothy Leadership Centre.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to sponsor / part-sponsor a student.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like details of giving through Gift Aid and / or by standing order.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to set up a group to pray for Cambodia and CCC.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like someone from CCC to give a presentation at my church.</p>