

ប្រជារាស្ត្រខ្មែរគ្រីស្ទ ជាយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ Cambodia for Christ

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Writing about prayer, J. Oswald Sanders had this to say. "In His sovereignty, God has voluntarily bound Himself to human co-operation in the government of the world. In the spiritual realm, He has also bound Himself to the prayer of faith of His children. This is deeply mysterious but clearly revealed. He links His working with man's praying, and this lays on us a great responsibility. He commands us to pray, and leads us to believe that our prayers can significantly alter the course of events."

Prayer could be the pivot on which the Khmer Republic continues as an independent state or falls into Communist hands, whether freedom of religion is tolerated or stamped out. Our prayers could be crucial to the future of Cambodia's seven million people, will they hear the Good News of Jesus Christ or will the door of opportunity be closed. because the Church worldwide has not prayed?

After four years of guerilla warfare the Khmer have learned to carry on regardless of restrictions, shortages and many basic necessities being unobtainable, the inevitable inconveniences are accepted, life must go on. There has been an increase in political activity recently, and news reports of renewed bombing, but few details to include in this letter. Marshall Lon Nol, President of the Khmer Republic, made a public call for peace on 9th July. No prior conditions before talking together were asked from the Khmer Rouge, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong from South Vietnam. Mr. Dean, the USA Ambassador in Phnom Penh is working for a peaceful solution to the war.

In previous letters, background to the culture, history, geography and economy of the Khmer Republic had been given. Education is an important factor in Asian thought, as any visitor to the East will know. In rural society in Cambodia, high status is characteristically accorded to monks, important government officials, and wealthy aristocrats. In the larger urban centres, status is now attained not only by these means but through higher education, which may lead to a responsible position in society. To a limited extent, women, previously barred from temple through educational and occupational advancement conducted by the Buddhist monks, now have greater educational and occupational advancement.

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Prayer and support for God's work and His Church in the Khmer Republic.

In 1972 1.2 million students at all levels represent a nearly fourfold increase since 1955, and growing numbers are being educated outside the Buddhist schools and universities. All nine of the universities have been established since 1955, most recently in the large provincial capitals of Battambang, Kompong Chum and Takeo-Kampot. The war has had its effects on schooling, as many French teachers and lecturers left the country when bombing increased earlier this year. The building programme has had to be curtailed due to supplies being needed for other projects and a slowing down of materials reaching the capital due to hazards along the Mekong River.

Although about 90 percent of the people use Khmer as their language, higher education is still conducted primarily in French, and French tends to be the language of those in professional activities. Illiteracy, estimated to be as high as 69 percent in 1953, has been reduced to less than 40 percent among those fifteen years and older. This striking reduction reflects the governments's great emphasis on public education, both at the younger level and in adult education programmes: In recent years, close to a fourth of Cambodia's annual budget had been spent each year on education. This educational drive was not without its problems. The greater mobility of the more educated people was reflected in the rapid increase in population in Phnom Penh and several other urban centres. Many school graduates are unprepared or unwilling to work in technical and blue-collar jobs. Although independence brought a need for more indigenous people in government positions, the numbers of those graduating from secondary and higher institutions far exceed the available openings, resulting in considerable underemployment and unemployment. This educational elite, not fully employed, apparently provided one of the pressures leading to the March 1970 change in government.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

Christians too are involved in education. A long term project undertaken by World Vision is aimed at helping the Khmer Evangelical Church build and operate schools. The pupils will be sponsored through their childcare programme and funds have been given for the building and operating of four schools, and a secondary school is also being built. Other schools are planned, and the Church leadership have been asked to give a proposal for the purchase of land for future school sites. Land is much cheaper now because of the uncertain future of the country. An offer was made some time ago to World Vision by the Khmer government to give land if they would build a facility to care for some of the war orphans. The Khmer-Church agreed to provide the staff for such an orphanage or children's hospital under construction in Phnom Penh is scheduled to be finished about January with furnishings installed and the building ready for patients about April. Dr. and Mrs. Dean Kroh will soon be back in Phnom Penh, to be joined by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Bishop. Mr Bishop has been appointed administrator for the medical Programme. Miss Carol Weston and Miss Lynn Walsh have been appointed to the nursing staff. (See pictures) Pray for them.



It is anticipated that Dr. and Mrs. David Thompson will join the staff in mid-1975. As yet neither a paediatrician nor an anaesthetist has been found to complete the staff. There are now about 70 Cambodians working with the World Vision Medical Teams. Pray for each one, that each may accept Christ as Saviour and really live for Him. Remember two nurses, Mary Lou Rorabaugh and Barbara Heath as they come into contact with them daily. Pray for many families being reached at the 60 bed intensive care centre for severely

RADIO RESPONSE.

Not only are regular broadcasts received. from FEBC in Manila, but the possibility exists that the Khmer government may permit short broadcasts on the local government-operated stations, reaching all sections of the country. Most people own transistor radios which means that many will be able to hear the gospel.

The following is an excerpt from a letter received by FEBC from a Cambodian. "What a wonderful thing I used to listen to every evening over the air. Your talk, song, way of explaining God's Word and about Jesus Christ, the unique Saviour in this changing world, are really the things I. admire and am in need to live among people throughout the world. I should like to tell you I am very much excited when all my attentions concentrate on your broadcasting and I would like your program lasts for ever so that I can know in detail God's Words. But to tell you the truth, I never see or possess a Bible or a New Testament. Thus, I always have some difficulties when I cannot gather all your reading of what you have said....So how can I manage to get the Holy Book I wish to have?

May I trouble you a little more? I am very curious to know a lot about Jesus for I was born a Buddhist."

While his English is not perfect, this school teacher from the town of Siem Reap (near Angkor Wat) exemplifies the thousands in the Khmer Republic who are searching for truth and reality in a land torn by war and ideological conflicts.

A soundproof studio and recording equipment of sufficient quality to produce acceptable tapes for broadcasting is needed in Phnom Penh.

TRANSLATORS.

Praise the Lord for Roselyn Barnes (a new Translator) and Barbara Pakenham who moved to the Khmer Republic in June to become the third team there. Pray for a quick adjustment and good language learning. Pray for protection for all teams from continual shelling

In late June, Ken and Marilyn Gregerson conducted a Linguistics-Anthropology seminar in Phnom Penh for officials of the country. Pray that God will use this to further understanding of the SIL programme there.

INDIVIDUALS.

Two students who stayed at the new Youth Centre with Andrew Way are now back at the Tha Khmau Bible School. Philip, whose grandfather must have been one of the first Christians in Cambodia, taught the guitar and music to a number of young people at the Youth Centre, he taught them from the Bible too. He asks prayer for monks to receive Christ.



Part of the staff of the Bible School.

Dee is another student, he comes from a Buddhist home. He believed about two years ago. He teaches about 15 young people on Sundays at his church. He also taught three times a week at the Centre, and has just translated a book by Walter Trobisch. He asks prayer for his family to turn to Christ. Hon is a teenager, the eldest of six. He goes to school just a couple of hours a day. He was helped to buy a Khmer Bible (very cheap at 65p, but expensive for him). He reads it daily at home. A friend at school told him about Jesus and brought him to hear Mark's Gospel at the Centre. When chapter seven was reached, about the evil heart, he came and asked to have a new heart from God. He has steadily followed Jesus since then. Hon's parents are staunch Buddhists and there has been opposition. Hon is not ashamed of the Lord Jesus even though his family want him to give up being a follower, Please pray for him, his youngest sister, aged five, died suddenly in early August.

OTHER NEWS.

The Lord continues to bless Church growth. One missionary writes that church groups are beginning in many homes, the pattern in Acts is being reproduced, with spontaneous growth of fellowships primarily in the homes of new Christians. These new believers radiate their love for Christ.

Our prayers are requested for the establishing of a Church at Battambang after the meetings held by Ravi Zacharias in July. Many attended but few have carried on who professed faith in Christ. On this same theme we as the body of Christ are urged. to pray much for the young converts in this land, that they may be kept during a period of confusion for them with numerous groups now coming to Cambodia. With so many Christians being untrained babes in Christ, it is difficult for them to determine who is genuine and who is not. Training sessions are being held and Bible classes taught but it is difficult to properly instruct all of those who come to Christ before they are contacted by other groups.

Mr Mau Vanna, professor of music at the university, was led to the Lord in April. He is the composer of the Khmer National Anthem, and composed songs for young People when singing for Prince Sihanouk. He directs music as well as composes. Pray that this may be the Lord's way of providing Christian music with a Khmer flavour. He has already indicated his willingness to help in music at the Bethany Church.

Please remember Major Chhirc Taing in Phnom Penh. He has many responsibilities in the Church, Executive Secretary, advisor to other projects, also head of the World Vision child-care programme. His duties as Secretary to the Minister of Defence are also very demanding. Pray that he may soon be reunited with his wife and daughter who are in Edinburgh.

Here at Winchester, we have two prayer tapes by Andrew Way giving background to the Khmer people, the Church situation and prayer topics. These are available on request, please send enough to cover postage. We hope to borrow a colour documentary film from World Vision on Cambodia and this will be available for showing at interested groups. Some fixed display boards on-Cambodia (of a general nature) are also here for use at meetings. These are bulky, but can be sent by British Rail.

If anyone is interested in making contact with Khmer people interested in learning English, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (Newington Green, London N16 9QD) produce some excellent material based on the Gospels. This gives an opportunity of sharing your faith by correspondence.

Thank you for continued prayer for the Khmer people and those who work among them. May peace soon come, and the harvest be brought in while the open-door and opportunity exists.

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