



# ACTION



Number 184 : Spring 2020

Sowing the seeds of a new tomorrow for Cambodia



>> **THIS ISSUE:** • *Health care in Cambodia*

*Page 5*

• *Marriages Restored*

*Page 6*

• *Opportunities to give to Cambodia Action*

*Page 11*

# Cambodia Action

Registered Name:  
Southeast Asian Outreach  
UK Charity Number: 293382

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Cambodia Action 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.

Cambodia Action is a member of International Co-operation Cambodia (ICC), Global Connections and the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC).

## DONATIONS

We rely on God to meet our needs through gifts. 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.

Cheques should be made payable to "Cambodia Action" and sent to the Yate Office.


## BANKERS


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 CambodiaAction

 @Cambodia\_Action

Cambodia Action is working in partnership in  
Cambodia with a number of local NGOs

# >> Inside this issue:



>> MARRIAGES RESTORED - GOOD REAL MEN

Pages 6-7



>> NEIL EDBROOKE - COLD WATER TO A WEARY SOUL Page 8



>> PALLIATIVE CARE REPORT

Page 9

>> Editorial**'Behold the winter is past' Song of Solomon**

Dear Friends,

Spring is in the air. The time of new beginnings when we in the northern hemisphere start to forget about winter and look forward to longer and warmer days.

Cambodia Action is looking at a new season which will include the appointment of an in-country Executive Director. This will be someone who will strengthen the existing team members and look to identify new projects with which Cambodia Action can develop strong partnerships. This process is currently on-going, please continue to pray for God's leading.

In any new season there are questions, apprehensions and possibly some uncertainties, however Cambodia Action is looking at this new season with faith and hope. There will be no changes to our commitment to Cambodia, no changes to our presence as a charity in the UK. We will continue to share with you, our invaluable faithful partners, what the

Lord is doing through our work in Cambodia.

In this edition you will read of a miracle of restored marriages in Kampong Spue Province. It is like spring, a new start has flooded the hearts of a number of couples, I am glad that we were part of this.

Zoran Sulc one of our more senior team members writes of the need to pray for missionaries continued well-being as they are exposed to many different health issues. Zoran saw first-hand how having the right insurances in place was a great benefit to his recovery.

Towards the back of this edition you will hear from our newest partner, Sunrise, who are ministering and helping practically among some of the poorest people.

A big thank you to those that supported the Christmas gifts, your Generosity came through again.

God bless,  
Chris



**Action Magazine**

Would you prefer to receive our magazine via email? Please contact us via [admin@CambodiaAction.org](mailto:admin@CambodiaAction.org) and we will add you to the already growing list of subscribers.

## >> Beyond the spoken word



Communication is an art form, so much more than just the science of vocabulary, structures of sentences and paragraphs. The purpose of communication is to make others understand and respond to what has been communicated. In the literate world, we talk about “reading between the lines”, psychologists and anthropologists theorise the meanings behind body language, and we all unconsciously reveal our “tells” in everyday life.

Although progress is slow, one year on, I continue to try to grapple with the Khmer written and spoken language. However, over the last few weeks, I have also been starting

to learn another form of Khmer – Khmer sign language. I love sign language as it is so expressive, with hand and facial gestures combining to convey the message. “A picture is worth a thousand words” the adage goes, and very often a deaf sign beautifully sums up the concept behind a word. The Deaf Community is one of a number of silent minorities here that are in need of greater recognition and support.

Despite my lack of Khmer, the sights, actions and body language of a cross section of life here in Cambodia have communicated the need, the discouragements, the fears and the joys. They come through the eyes of a family whose beloved child suffered brain damage following encephalitis, the weary shrugs of the dispirited and hopeless, the heart wrenching sobs of a grandmother who hasn't the funds to pay for her granddaughter's treatment for dengue fever and fears for her life, but also in the shared joy of dance at a rural wedding with a hill tribe woman with whom there was no other form of communication.



People sometimes ask why go - just send the equivalent money instead? When God chose to communicate His love for the world he demonstrated it not by word alone, but by His actions, His “tells”, His signs – He sent His Son. Why serve in Cambodia? ... to communicate God's love beyond the spoken word ... “if you do it not for the least of these, you do it not for me” Mt 25v45

By Sharron Catton

## &gt;&gt;When you pray for our good health...

One thing missionaries constantly ask of support in is, prayer for their good health. What's taken for granted in the UK and the Western world is very different to what is normal in Cambodia. It's not just hepatitis, dengue fever, coronavirus or what is currently doing the rounds - we must take precautions over all but simple things like the safety of what we eat and drink – when should I say yes to a kind offer or gracefully decline? Street food may look inviting but is it wise to eat? And you can't assume restaurant kitchens are any safer. Sometimes saying grace requires faith as well.

Road accidents are dismayingly frequent. Motor-bikes are cheap but vulnerable (July-Sept 2019 : 392 killed). You cannot rely on others being qualified drivers or keeping to the rules of the road. And as a pedestrian you need eyes in the back of your head!

Cheaper accommodation may have dubious electrics; steep and irregular steps in houses have caused horrendous falls and visitors may not be friendly. A nice garden invites insects, arachnids, reptiles – with and without legs!

If we do get sick – is reliable health care available – especially outside major towns? Cambodia Action worker Zoran needed emergency detached retina treatment. There were only 2 doctors who could provide this – both in the city of Phnom Penh. Had he been in the provinces one eyes certainly would

have been lost.



### Zoran travelling with IV drip

What does it cost to get trustworthy treatment? There is no NHS in Cambodia – the rule is - no money equals no treatment! So many locals just pay for the minimum treatment. This why Cambodia Action insist that all their member have adequate health cover. Zoran also recently needed his gall bladder removing, the cost over 12,000 pounds! When mission support is raised remember this must be paid for – and it's not cheap for a whole family

And then there is the pain of seeing Cambodians whom you love suffer without the safety net we have. In the UK the NHS has taken away so much of the fear of sickness. Reliable caring treatment, pure medication, no bill at the end – it's a world away from what many Cambodians experience. Too often they are gripped with fear



## >> When you pray for our good health (continued)

when they feel ill; fear of it being serious, fear of the attitude of medics (who are usually nicer to paying foreigners), fear of the cost, fear of wrong treatment and fake medicines. There are times when we know we must help (I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me). A friend had to take his son to a public hospital recently, his experience was difficult with his child

having share a bed with two other people.

Give thanks that in the UK we don't have to endure this. Please remember to pray for the good health and safety of your missionaries and those they work with.

By Zoran Sulc.

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## >> MARRIAGES RESTORED & BLESSED IN KOMPONG SPUE - GOOD REAL MEN

Zoran Sulc, adviser to Good Real Men, was asked to help to bring the gospel to about 20 men who work at Agape mattress factory, in rural Kampong Spue province, set up by CA missionaries Herry and Susie to create self-sustaining jobs there.

Zoran has been visiting every fortnight – using Bible stories to show how Christ can change men. He uses examples of men who fail (such as Jacob and Peter) but are transformed, and men who are blessed because of their trust in God (such as Noah and Jonathan). The workers see how salvation results in Christ transforming them into men with admirable characteristics who can live life in a new way. A major outcome is that relationships improve as men become better sons, husbands and fathers.

In December one man, Nial said he wanted his marriage to be restored. He divorced his wife, Sambath, 4 years ago when she got them into serious debt without telling him. This is not unusual in Cambodia when extended family problems can lead to



unwise borrowing. Neither of them took another spouse and after some time following Christ he was willing to forgive her and wanted her back. Meanwhile she had seen a positive change in him and was open to returning to him.

Zoran and his wife Margaret met with them. Nial was prayed with and he forgave his wife and was willing to trust her again. They told Sambath that for the marriage to succeed she really needed to receive Christ as saviour for herself. She was willing and did so! They then both held hands, looked at each other in the face, recited some simple vows and forgave each other. There were both tears and joy as they were restored to each other.



When other couples were told of this they too wished their marriages to be blessed by the Lord. So on 30th December there was a wonderful celebration with 4 more couples, joined by two missionary couples, who rededicated themselves to Christ and each other – asking him to lead them and their families.

This is the fruit that Good Real Men wants to see – salvation that transforms men and their marriages, families, homes and communities.

By Zoran and Herry

## >> LIKE COLD WATER TO A WEARY SOUL IS GOOD NEWS FROM A DISTANT LAND

This was my first ever visit to Cambodia, a colourful, vibrant, attractive young country that often seems hidden in the shadows of its immediate better known neighbours, Vietnam and Thailand, and beyond that the overwhelming size and power of China to the north, and India to the west. I'd met Chris Catlin, Executive Director of Cambodia Action, over breakfast one day. He promptly invited me to come and meet the Cambodia Action team and gain a better understanding of their work first hand. An unusual (and challenging) invitation to receive after scrambled eggs and coffee. A privilege too.



In reality, I met a diverse and dedicated group of around a dozen people, all working in partnerships with local people, well described on the Cambodia Action website, but coming alive for me as they described personal journeys that had brought them to this point. Some of these stories would make a good book. But the common factor, despite their mix of age, nationality and very different projects, was a love for the people of the coun-

try. I could write about a lot of different experiences and impressions from my visit, but in essence, I think this was, as the proverb says, the living, refreshing water. When Paul wrote his lyrical description of love, he wasn't thinking of marriage services - he was addressing our everyday life and work with a wonderful analysis of human relationships, what makes them flourish, or wither.

I appreciated the understated, personal approach of the Cambodia Action's team. In a country where many Christian and secular NGOs operate, it would be tempting to define success in many competitive ways: size, growth and numbers, the metrics that the world defines as efficient and important. But Jesus' strategy for change was and is utterly counter-intuitive to those ways of thinking. He prioritised friendship. Clearly Jesus's leadership training was about developing people more than delivering traditional outcomes. The

wisdom of his approach is our presence today. Limited resources, rightly placed and nurtured, produce unimagined results. Cambodia Action might be characterised as a mustard seed mission.

Paul said, love never fails, like water to the soul.

By Neil Edbrooke



## >> The Sunrise Project - Kampon Cham, Cambodia

Cambodian and Chinese Buddhists differ in their handling of the dead. Cambodians cremate those who pass while the Chinese bury their dead. Near Kampong Cham 125 kilometres north of Phnom Penh, there is a large Chinese graveyard still half empty and as a result, a community of squatters gradually moved in, resulting in the landowners collecting rent from them.

Currently a number of poorly built houses made of wood, tin, and other scrap materials, house ey-chai people, the name given to the community of recyclers who go through the neighbourhoods calling for residents to come out and sell their cans, bottles, cardboard or paper. Sometimes these recyclers work through the night salvaging items from trash bags left for collection in the street. These workers carry everything home on carts, sort and repackage the waste, and sell it to recycling facilities of Vietnam. Their profit margin is razor-thin and thus their families tend to be quite poor. Add HIV/AIDS into this mix and life becomes pretty overwhelming.



Sunrise, our newest partner, provides social support for those living with HIV/AIDS through their Home-Based Care program. Sidon, one of the staff members of Sunrise, visits terminal patients once or twice a month to ensure that rain isn't coming through their poorly built homes, that doctor appointments are being kept, that there is enough food in the house. Chhun, another staff member, visits their children checking on school attendance, books, homework, and pays the (mandatory) tutoring fees to the teachers. Out of despair parents want to pull their children out of school to ease the family budget but this is where Sunrise's work becomes the vital life-line to keeping the children in school.

### **Vuthy's story:**

Vuthy is 13 years old. Vuthy's dad lost a leg in a landmine accident when he was a soldier. Finding and keeping work since then has proven really difficult. Their workday begins at 3 a.m. with Vuthy driving the moto while his dad rummages through people's trash collecting recyclable materials. They work long hours making it difficult for Vuthy attend to school. Both of Vuthy's parents are HIV positive.

## >> (continued)

Their family life is often affected by domestic violence and at times they separate which in turns leaves Vuthy unable to attend school. However, since Sunrise began working with this family, Vuthy is now in the 2nd grade. His mum now works at a hotel in Phnom Penh and though times are still lean and dad at times is too sick and can't work, the family can rely on the rice supplements from the Sunrise Home-Based Care programme. Their house is also in need of repairs which Sunrise will help with.



This year, Sunrise is investigating composting with earthworms or black soldier flies, which would allow families like Vuthy's, to collect food waste and turn it into fertilizer or chicken feed, improving their income and reducing their dependence on Sunrise's resources. Please pray for the success of this initiative!

By Susan Smith from Sunrise

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## >> CHRISTMAS GIVING REPORT BACK

Each year we give our valued supporters and readers an opportunity to give towards one of our partnerships in Cambodia. In the last magazine, four such partners were featured:-

- Sponsoring children to attend school
- Medicines for prisoners
- Christmas and New Year celebrations with men
- Supporting children in dire emergencies.

**Thank you** for your generosity, we collected £864.75 that is disbursed among the featured partnerships.

*Thank  
You!*

## >> Opportunities to give to Cambodia Action

It is estimated that 22% of all retail sales in the UK are done online, the equivalent to 142 billion pounds. Retailers understand the trend and outlets such as Amazon are offering incentives to charities when people buy online.

Signing up to a favoured retailer online and nominating your charity could attract some small percentage of the purchase to a charity of choice. Give as you live, Amazon smile and recycle4charity are some of Cambodia Action's retail partners.



**Give as you Live<sup>®</sup>**



**Sign up today, nominate Cambodia Action and create donations each time you buy online.**

# Prayer and Thanksgiving

## >> PRAYER

China is the largest source of tourist and businessmen visiting Cambodia, up to 2.5 million people this coming year. Also Cambodia has a growing population of resident Chinese people that are coming back and forth from mainland China. With the spread of the deadly Coronavirus, Cambodia is one of those countries that can be effected. Although there has only been one reported case, let's pray that this does not spread, that people become not only aware but proactive.

Many of our team are exposed to different foods, accommodations and climate changes. Please pray that the Lord would protect our team in the field. Pray Psalm 91: 9-10 'Because you have made the LORD your dwelling my refuge, the Most High, no evil will befall you, no plague will approach your tent'

While being back in the UK, Jeri Lee has undergone an operation to her eyes. Please pray for her that she will be completely restored and that her vision improves.

Families back home play a very important in any missionary's life, be this mums, dads, brothers, sisters or children. We need to see them as part of the missionary's extended family. Please pray for our team's families, for their health and well-being, that The Lord would watch over our team's families.

## >> THANKSGIVING

In this edition we read of a quick recovery of Zoran for a nasty operation that he had to undergo. Previously Zoran had issues with his eyes, we thank God that Phnom Penh has good doctors and good hospital facilities.

We thank God that the news of this deadly virus has been kept at bay from Cambodia, only one resolved case. The Cambodian government are applauded for hosting and helping those that were stranded on an ocean liner- Thank God that fear did not turn them away.



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