

## River of Life Church, Cambodia Ministry Impact Report Spring 2012

**Rev. Mony Mok, ministry leader**

The Cambodia-Thai border dispute that began in June 2008 is the latest round of a century-long dispute between Cambodia and Thailand over the 11th Century Preah Vihear Temple. The most recent development is that Cambodia and Thailand have agreed to withdraw their troops from the area. We're thankful for this agreement and hope to see the relationship between our countries continue to improve.

The National Committee on Disaster Management reports that the recent flooding in our country affected 231,000 people. Around 23,000 people had to be evacuated to higher ground, and many roads and buildings suffered damage. About 100 people lost their lives. Around 170,000 hectares of rice fields and 63,000 homes were under water. The floods were Cambodia's worst since 2000 when more than 370 people died.

The River of Life Church Cambodia began in 1996 to reach this predominantly Buddhist and Hindu nation with the almighty truth of His Gospel. We truly believe that only our Lord Jesus Christ can bring real peace, hope, salvation and love to this suffering country. As you have joined with us in partnership, our vision has turned into reality. People have been saved, new churches have been planted, leaders have been trained, and development projects have been offered to help the community in the name of Christ. To God be all the glory!

**CHURCH PLANTING & EVANGELISM** Today, multitudes of people have lost hope because there are no answers in sight for their future. They have been stressed beyond all limits, facing one disappointment after another. The only answer to their need is the Gospel.

Our 60 church planters have been travelling from place to place, sometimes as far as 60 miles a day, to bring the Gospel to un-reached people. The monthly support that you provide for our church planters helps reduce the burden of their families' basic needs and helps with travel expenses as they minister. We are so grateful for your support.

Last year through their ministry, 1,182 people put their faith in Christ and 12 new churches were planted. Our workers face more hindrances since the government banned door-to-door witnessing, however they are totally committed to the Great Commission and seeing God's Kingdom established here in Cambodia. One of the workers says:- "I am one of the church planters in Siem Reap Province. I am blessed to serve the Lord in helping people to know Jesus Christ. My desire is to plant more churches in my province. The support I receive from you helps provide the daily essential needs such as food for my family so that I can concentrate on bringing the Gospel to the lost, and planting more new churches. Thank you so much."



*Pastor Mony Mok prays for a group of church leaders to serve with integrity, compassion and wisdom*

**TRAINING** We conducted five training programmes for women, pastors, leaders, and leader couples this past year. 'Bridges for Women' is a course to facilitate a story-telling ministry among women of oral cultures. The trainees learn how to act out the parables of the Bible through drama, song, and other arts. The emphasis of this course is on developing evangelism and discipleship strategies within women's ministry, especially for reaching out to illiterate women in remote villages. In February, we held trainings in two locations. The first was in Phnom Penh, which was the follow-up of the first session from last year. There were 12 women who attended the training. The second was in Banteay Meanchey Province for 25 women.

A lady on one of our church-planting teams in Phnom Penh says: "After receiving the Bridges for Women training, I began to use the method of story-telling with the mostly illiterate women of a fellowship in my village. I began by telling a Bible story and then I asked questions for them to answer. The stories touched their hearts so much that it caused them to love Jesus even more."

The second type of training is for pastors and leaders. We offered this seminar in three locations for a total of 311 people. The theme of the seminars was 'Victory in Serving God'. We focused on the authority of the believer, how to defeat temptation, and giving. The Holy Spirit moved nightly in these meetings. Many received awesome manifestations of healing in their bodies.

The third type of training was for leader couples. The focus was on strengthening their marriage relationships. Each of the seven leader couples had the opportunity to share their issues, listen, and learn from each other. The women were free to share what was on their hearts as well as the men. The outcome was fruitful. They returned home with oneness, and their souls, minds and spirits were renewed by the Word of God.

Two other trainings took place on leadership and integrity—one for young potential leaders in Phnom Penh and another for regional leaders. Thank you for supporting these key training events which have greatly blessed our ministry.

**MOTORCYCLES** Without motorbikes, it would be very difficult to travel in the countryside. Some villages are in remote areas and only accessible by rough roads. With a motorbike, our church planters can travel easily to witness, encourage the believers, conduct Bible studies, and launch new fellowships.

A pastor working in Preah Vihear Province who received a motorbike last year says, "Much of the province is extremely remote and thickly forested. Going around this province is very difficult. I used to travel to preach the Gospel and to care for cell groups in different places with a very old motorbike. It took a long time for me to reach each place, and sometimes it did not work. It takes one hour or more to reach each cell group. The new motorbike I received with your support has helped me tremendously with travel on rough roads and reduced travel time. This is a blessing from God."



*The pastor in remote Preah Vihear who received a motorbike prays with a sick man*

## TESTIMONY

**A SON TRANSFORMED, A FAMILY REDEEMED** "My name is Neth. I am 23 years old and live in a village in Kampong Cham Province. My family is poor. My parents have tried so hard to help me, but all I cared about was my own free will. I brought much heartache and disappointment to my parents. I drank, rebelled, and sought to fulfil my fleshly desires.

"After finishing 9th grade, I decided to become a Buddhist monk. This way, I could continue with my education and repay the goodness of my parents. I was a monk for five years, but I decided that the lifestyle was not for me. So I left the monastery to become a regular person. I got a job as a construction worker, and travelled from place to place. Again, I resumed my old lifestyle.

"Then one day, someone invited me to a church near my job site. I enjoyed the praise and my faith in Jesus. Shortly after that, I quit my job as a construction worker and returned home. Once I arrived in my village, I started to look for other Christians, but I found none. I was the only Christian in the village.

"About one month later, a lady from the River of Life Church in Kampong Chhnang Province visited my village. Her village is located on the other side of the river. After meeting her, I started to cross the river every Sunday to attend the church in her village. The Word totally transformed my life from the inside out. I no longer wanted to do all the foolish things I did before. I wanted others in my village to believe in Jesus Christ, too.

"I began to witness to my cousin, and she accepted Jesus. Next, I shared the Good News with my mother who was a devoted Buddhist nun. It was not easy, but she accepted Jesus Christ as well! Now we have a fellowship of about 20 people in my village.

"Thank you, Jesus, for saving me. I want to serve you for the rest of my life."



**HOLISTIC OUTREACH** Our teams visit the prisoners in Banteay Meanchey Prison each month to teach them from the Bible. Out of 1,063 prisoners, there are now 340 believers. In addition to Bible studies, we distribute soap, shampoo, bread and noodles. We believe that the Word of God will change their hearts and make them a new creation.

We distributed rice to people suffering from the flooding. Their houses were under water. Their crops were completely wiped out by the flood water. The needs were far beyond our capacity. But we were able to help 626 people in the affected areas.

We still conduct our monthly feeding programme for 100-200 poor children. Our goal is to help these at-risk children have a better life and hope for their future through improved care and education. These children are often left to live with their poor relatives or neighbours in inadequate conditions. Some have been left behind by their parents who died or are working in other countries. Eventually, they become easy prey for human traffickers.

Through all our relief and development activities in 2011, nearly 7,500 people were helped.

**THE LOSS OF A SISTER** In January, one of our leaders in Banteay Meanchey Province, Pastor Neang Horl and his wife Koeun Sok were involved in a serious motorbike accident. They were on their way to pick up another sister to come to the storytelling training. Pastor Neang sustained an injury to his thigh, but the doctor was able to fix it. Koeun sustained a serious head injury and a broken leg. On February 3rd, she went home to be with the Lord. Koeun left behind Neang, her husband of 30 years, five daughters and three grandchildren. Please pray for Neang and the family. We believe her death will bring more fruit to God's Kingdom in her village as they remember her life.

**THANK YOU** We have been greatly encouraged by your faithful support and prayers. Thank you for helping us in so many ways. We simply could not do what we are doing in Cambodia without your prayers and partnership. May the Lord bless you.

**PLEASE PRAY...**

- **For divine guidance and wisdom for our leaders.**
- **For safety, protection and good health for all of our church planters.**
- **For the ministry of religions to release more church permits.**
- **For God to work in the hearts of the villagers, disaster victims, children and prisoners we are serving. May they know His grace and salvation.**
- **For God's comfort and strength for the family of our late sister Koeun.**



*Above: The flooding that struck Cambodia last year was the worst in a decade.*

*Below: Children gather for the highlight of their month—the day the River of Life pastors come to visit!*

