



The Khmer Chronicle

The Cambodian Ministry Newsletter
of George and Shary Frahm
February 2016
Volume 6 Edition 2



Our guest writer this month is Pastor Joshua Hatcher. Thank you Josh!

~Words Fail~

by Rev. Joshua M. Hatcher
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"Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear, and the blind can read." - Mark Twain

The second we pulled into the distant countryside village of Snor, I could tell that my new friend had his work cut out for him. The lone missionary pastor in a community of around 600, the vast majority of them children, Pastor Chut Samuel pours the Gospel onto a landscape that's never heard the name of Jesus. In Cambodia, 19 out of 20 adults are practicing Buddhists, and statistically speaking, the 20th is one mindfulness chime away from joining them. The next town over - a larger village called Pour - houses a Buddhist Temple and an active community of traveling monks. Like I said, he's got his work cut out for him.



Samuel and I met the morning of our third day in Cambodia. We were having breakfast, neither one of us knowing at first what to make of the other, when one of us (I can't remember which) made some snarky comment about tourists and we both started

laughing uncontrollably. His English is much better than my Khmer, but the language barrier was still seismic. Language is overrated. The Cross is broad enough to bridge the want of words.

As the pastor of a (very) downtown Lutheran parish, it's difficult sometimes to relate to my brothers in ministry. Our campus at Trinity is a peninsula; bordered on three sides by the horseshoe of Memphis' Criminal Justice Complex. In short, we're surrounded by a prison. We've got our work cut out for us.

We saw "it" immediately in Samuel; in the way he carried himself. This guy is the real thing. He's kindred. A man of deep and abiding prayer, he's kindling a fire on a wet heap of altar wood hostile to even the mere mention of Jesus. In Memphis, we're prayerfully trying to re-ignite fading embers in a community that's largely grown too accustomed to the idea of Christianity to notice it's real meaning. Who would have thought we'd share the same challenges, the same joys and the same reliance on the unknowable movement of the Spirit; all without sharing the language to talk about it. After more than three years, Samuel and I still stay in touch through email and social media. We still share our joys and our challenges as often as we can. The Holy Spirit is a wild and unpredictable wind. His family and his parish community are both growing like wildfire. Despite all his challenges, Samuel is building a facility to go along with the Church the Lord has already built.

The Church is a global community that transcends so many things. It bridges chasms of geography, social economy, politics, world views, and language. I thank God for Samuel, both as a pastor to Christ's Church and as a dear friend. I can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for his family, his parish, and His ministry.

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." - Philippians 1:3-6.

Trinity Lutheran Church and their Pastor Joshua Hatcher, thru their continued prayer and partnership with Snor Village and Pastor Chut Samuel, combined their efforts and their powerful and prayerful efforts across the big pond and a piece of land will soon be purchased to build a church and dig a pond to raise fish to support the church and the village of Snor. Until this time they have been meeting in the local school or under homes in the village community. We asked Pastor Josh to share his thoughts about his friend half a world away but standing next to him in spirit and love of a Father who brought them together. Pastor Samuel will also be ordained yet this year into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia.



Surprise!

We were surprised with a visit from coworkers from GLO this past month. Dale and Cheri Talsma popped in for a week to see for themselves how God's ministry in

Cambodia is shining. We are thankful for such great team members who mightily pray for this ministry even more effectively now as they have seen it for themselves.



Knee Thoughts



Thank you God for the public bus system and metered taxis that have helped reduce our travel costs around town.

Praise to a Lord who has allowed us to eat with the Khmer people without getting sick. This has allowed us to form deep relationships in the villages.

Pray for God's blessing on the ELCC plan to put a ministry/mission center in each of the provinces of Cambodia.



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