



The Khmer Chronicle

The Cambodian Ministry Newsletter
of George and Shary Frahm
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Cow ~ Boy

Definition ~Cowboy: a man, typically one on horseback, who herds and tends cattle.

Going to church in Cambodia is always interesting, and has a learning curve attached to it that will never end. However, the more we engage the local community the easier it gets. They are so gracious in bringing us along in this communal time of worship, providing us with a translated order of worship, songs that sometimes can be linked to English, and of course the bible readings for the day. Sermons are another thing though. The sermons relate to people and the culture here. Most times we can relate and understand them, other times not so much. This time was a mix of both.



Our translator was Pastor Songin Um this time. He is a such a joy for the church. As he started to listen to the sermon, an audible chuckle and smile appeared on his face. Cowboy he said, using his hands to affirm that his translation meant just that, two words, cow and boy. Evidently he's been watching American cowboy movies at some point and

he wanted us to be sure that it wasn't that. Ok Songin, we got it.

The sermon started with a story that was heard the previous day during a conference in one of the provinces. A 50+ age gentleman was sharing his testimony about an incident of his life way back when he was a 'boy' of 14-15 when the Khmer Rouge were in power. He lived in the countryside then and his job was to tend the family 'cow.' One day the cow was nowhere to be found when he came to get it. With great fear and trepidation, he climbed the tallest palm tree in the area to get a better view of the surroundings and find the cow that had wandered away. He was the 'boy' whose job it was to tend the 'cow,' a cow-boy.

From the top of the tree, while he did see his cow, he also saw a lot more from this vantage point. He saw a Khmer Rouge soldier executing some local village people too. This was during the Pol Pot era of Cambodian history, one of the world's great genocides of the twentieth century. Unfortunately the people did not immediately die. To this day he remembers that very incident.

Today's sermon text was from Luke 13:1-9 with an emphasis on verses 6-9. Here goes the summary:

From his vantage point this man could see that the soldier was evil and had sinned because he had killed innocent people. The only problem as stated in this chosen part of the chapter is that the boy at that time had no

way to understand how sinful the others were as well.

Falling into a trap like this, would we also consider that we are better than the unbeliever who does not know Jesus?

A further cultural example explained here is about the fig tree. In Cambodia fig trees sometimes do not normally grow. In Israel, the native home of figs, fig trees are raised in sandy soil and usually do very well. In Cambodia, the figs may have insects inside and may be no good to eat. Furthermore, if we compare Israel and Cambodia, as a rich versus poor nation/man, the rich man has many choices as to what to do with his trees, but here in Cambodia, the simple poor man may not have many of those options available to him. So what should the poor man do? He does not have riches, choices, the option of travel or where to sleep at night.

Unfortunately for this rich man, he is only powerful in his own riches, but he is poor because he is not following God's command of what should be done to glorify Him.

Just because something is not immediately fruitful it doesn't mean that it is no good. God loves us so much that He is willing to go the extra mile for us, just like in the vineyard when after three years and no fruit, patience prevailed and manure was applied around the tree to encourage it to bear fruit. God is like that each and every day. God sent his son Jesus to be the caretaker and the power of the Holy Spirit to be the manure of our lives. Yup, it is indeed smelly isn't it, that process that is seen in the vineyard? But the results can be just the opposite. In the end fruit can be seen.

To think of what will be at the end of all of that toil, just effort, and caring to others in the vineyard who also need that manure in their lives to be fruitful and multiply. God just

wants us to be righteous and just in His name for all the souls he longs to come to Him.

“We're Coming Soon”

“I think I hear them George !” Their voices whisper softly in my ear “We're coming soon. It won't be long now.”

Their excitement is mounting, their questions are full of the depth of planning and strategizing. Plans are formulating, meetings are full of items to discuss, things to choose to do on the sidelines, and decisions to be made.

Who are 'they'? Well, they are a wonderful group of Godly men and women from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Palatine, IL who are making that long half way around the world flight to share Jesus, coming out of their own community and country, joining us for two weeks, much of it in the villages north and west of Phnom Penh. We know these people and their hearts. We have seen them 'in action', we have churched together, we have studied the bible together, we have laughed with and loved one another. This is good. Thank you Father !

In the meantime I'm doing the planning and organizing for the team's time here. I keep thinking, 'not too much, is this enough' to do/see in my mind. I keep telling them that the sky is the limit, but what's that mean here and now? Gratefully God knows for all of us and is cushioning each endeavor with enough uncertainty that we can know who's the mighty power here. Yup, He's sure busy these days on both sides of the pond. Is it stressful to prepare for something like this? Absolutely ~ for everyone on both sides of the world trying to mold this into a ministry platform that will glorify Him time and time again. And it will ~ Thank you Father !

Stay tuned ~ I'm sure there will be great things to share in the May newsletter.

Knee Thoughts



Praise and prayers for the Immanuel Lutheran Church team coming to Cambodia next month to share Jesus, be a part of and see God's ministry on the ground.

Praise for the ability to embrace the increasing daily heat index that will dissipate some time in May with the 'cold' season (as the locals call it) of reasonability.

Pray for God's blessing on the ELCC plan to put a ministry/mission center in each of the provinces of Cambodia and grow the Christian communities with it.



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