



Cambodian Servants

WORDS OF LIFE: HELPING TO EQUIP THE BODY OF CHRIST IN CAMBODIA

February- March 2007

Pin, A True Servant of God



On October 18, 2006 we received a call very early at about 5:30 in the morning from the Kracheh Children's Center. On the phone Saret told us that Pin was dead. He was watching a couple of sick kids in the night and was sleeping in his hammock near the kids. They tried to wake him, but he didn't wake up. He had died in his sleep. It was a shock that none of us could believe at Words of Life. Pin was only 45 years old and has a wife and eight children.

Noit and I had just spent two days with him only the day before and he was fine. The night before he died he was playing volleyball (he won!) and later went out with the other church planters for a fruit shake before bed. He stayed up caring for three kids until about 2:00am when he last spoke to any of the other leaders. After checking the kids at 2:00am he went back to sleep and did not wake up, or even call out. The following day we buried him at the Kracheh Center. He was so respected as a Christian leader that nearly every Christian in the province attended his funeral from every denomination. At his funeral there were just as many Buddhists as Christians too. Along the three mile journey from his home to the training center to be buried, the people came out of their homes to join in the funeral procession. The school let out early so the kids could line the street as Pin's casket came by. Christ was truly honored.

Six Years Following Christ

In Cambodia at the death of a person we read out a short family history usually detailing the basic events of their life, achievements they had and their children. Pin had eight kids and lived a colorful life. At the age of nine he was traded for his mother's life to the Khmer Rouge to become a child soldier. It was not until around 1998 that he was finally able to reunite with his mother after the war. After becoming a Christian he led his mother to Christ and most of his family. Pin became a Christian in the year 2000 at 39 years of age. He only lived as a Christian for six years. Immediately after becoming a Christian he asked to come study the Bible with me. He completed the basic 8 courses in his first year as a Christian. By the time we got to level 6 which deals with how to start a new church, he already started one. After his graduation we went to Kracheh to help him baptize the people in his new church. As everyone lined up to go in the water, Pin leaned over to me and said. . . "I haven't been baptized yet!" "Oh", I said, "then I better baptize you first." So off the two of us went into the water. I baptized him while his congregation looked on and then after coming up out of the water he said, "Hallelujah" and then immediately baptized his own congregation. In his six years as a Christian he had a direct hand in starting more than ten new churches (from among people who were formerly Buddhist)! He had a direct role in leading the entire tribe of the T'moan to Christ, as well as another whole village of Khmer's called "Chu-turn". In all, I would estimate that Pin led close to one thousand people to Christ (personally and one-by-one). Most remarkable are the ones who accepted Christ like the village chief of "Srie Cha" of whom Pin had personally burned the village down in 1995 (as a Khmer Rouge soldier), starting with the chief's house. He also was the one who would refuse to let family members accept Christ without them first talking to their own family about the decision and then making a family decision together. Without exception, when a individual was turned down by him, the entire family came to Christ within a few short days. If you think about it, in only short six years Pin literally led a person to Christ every other day!

Pin's life is a model of what a life completely sold out to Christ can look like. Pin always carried a Bible, hammock and an extra shirt with him so that he could travel to where he needed to go at a moments notice. He feared no one, except the Lord Jesus Christ, and it showed by how he lived his life. He was humble, kind and always had a funny joke or story to tell. Many nights Pin and I would lie in our hammocks looking up at the stars in the sky and share our experiences and plan trips to places that still had never heard about Jesus. He was constantly thinking about finding more people who had never heard about Jesus and how to keep the ones who had already believed living a righteous life. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." I could honestly tell people in Kracheh to "Follow Pin as he follows Christ." In only six years as a Christian he shames almost all of us, I think the only difference between Pin's life and anyone else's is that Pin was completely dedicated to be a follow of Christ, every single day he lived. What a challenge his life is to us all.

In Pictures: Many aspects of Pin's Ministry



Teaching people about Jesus



Always searching for the lost: traveling in the jungle



Pin bought a cow, then he had to walk it 20 miles to his house!



Pin catching a 10 foot python with his shoelaces



A group picture after finally finding the T'moan!



Baptizing a T'moan elder



Finally a good jungle meal, deer!



Crossing a river in the jungle



Fruit of ministry: Another baptism finished!

Pin's Family



Pin's wife, Khon Nic, with Noit

Pin never wanted his wife to work. He wanted to be the sole provider for his family. They had lived a hard life together, some of it while Pin was still a commander in the Khmer rouge, but Pin was resourceful and hard working. Having taught himself to be a doctor, his skills were in high demand for basic village medicine. Local hospitals continually cheat people, or keep them hospitalized just to get money out of them, but Pin was honest. They didn't care that he had never really studied to be a doctor. When Pin died, he left his family with no land (his house was on a friend's land, not his own). His only valuable possessions were a cell phone and a motorcycle. Leaving behind eight kids, the oldest only 19 and the youngest 5 was a terrible shock to the family. We are doing all we can to help the family and to educate his children, along with the help of some overseas friends who knew him.

We are hoping to be able to purchase them some land, drill a well, build a restroom and relocate their house so that they can firmly re-establish their life, but also be close to fellow Christians who can help them. Any gifts can be sent to through us to their family.



Haircut anyone? Anyway he could help others, he would



Winter in Cambodia

Amazingly in December 2006 it got very cold in Cambodia. December and January are usually our cool months, but temperatures rarely go below 80 degrees. This Christmas, however, the temperature dropped to about 60 degrees. The previous week we got a call from an organization that they had winter clothes that no one wanted and asked if we could use them. . . We said, "yes". . .never refusing a gift. . . And then the winter weather hit! Perfect (God's) timing!

Ministry through Medicine



Dr. Sasser taking some teeth out under a house.



Dr. Sharma doing a back surgery next to a chicken coop

Nations Training Institute brought another great medical team to Cambodia. The team worked very well together to treat nearly 1000 people medically and also for the first time we had a dentist who pulled a few hundred teeth a day, plus began treatment on all our staff and kids. It was an awesome time in which we were able to start one new church as a result of the efforts.

"Were tough"

Famous last words. Cambodian roads are mostly dirt, and red clay at that. I have seats in the back of my pickup to carry people if we need to, but I warned the team I would not recommend riding there because of the dust. One lady said, "I'm from West Texas, I'm used to dust." Well, having gone to college in West Texas I informed them that there was no comparison. . . After another warning I said "Ok, I warned you." For the next hour all I saw in the mirror was red clouds of dust. When we arrived, every inch of their bodies were plastered with the red dust. All they could do was laugh. Next time they believed me!



Antioch Institute Philippines

At the end of November the first full training in Mindanao (Philippines) started. In an effort to continue the vision of my father to train pastors in the southern Philippines, we started by inviting only those who train others. There are only two qualifications required, a person must be a church leader, and be willing to systematically disciple and train at least ten other people. We had 105 trainers for the first session. The total number of students trained is likely to reach to about 1,500. We provide every participant with the skills and materials to train their own people. This is so important, because they all come from remote mountainous areas of the Philippines which have little or no access to any training, books, or theological education. The participants come from some 13 different tribes, including a Tasaday (one of the most remote and primitive tribes in the world). We are excited about our partnership with the churches and they seem excited as well. At the end of the training, some of the pastors who did have previous training commented that much of the teaching they had never heard before and they were excited to be able to teach their people.



Steve teaching the first session



Trio of sisters singing

Prayer Points



- We have just received an incredible offer to buy a 3 bedroom house and about twenty acres of land adjoining our Kracheh children's center. The land is a plantation consisting of cashew nut trees and hardwood Teak wood. The asking price is \$50,000. We believe that if we could purchase this house and land, our Kracheh center would be well positioned for many years to come.
- Pray for more Khmer staff workers who are committed to the ministry. We need people who are teachers, translators, and church planters.
- Pray for all the foreign missionaries who are helping us now. In 2007 we will have Art and Robin Rice and their family, two music teachers from Malaysia and three missionary interns from Glad Tidings all working in Kracheh to help the children and churches there.

Paul Turns 7 Years Old



On December 15 we had the joy of celebrating Paul's seventh birthday. Mom and Dad made him a cake and all his friends came to celebrate.

T'moan Transformation

The long rainy season is finally over. One of Pin's last journey's on this earth was to attempt to visit the T'moan people during the rainy season. It is a daunting task in dry season when there is no rain, but in the wet season with daily rain it is nearly impossible to enter. Sure enough, after crossing 40 rivers, the last big obstacle was a major raging river, swollen to nearly 20 feet deep and over one hundred feet across. The team left all their belongings in the jungle on one side and swam the river, nearly drowning. They hiked a few miles to some of the closer houses, but were unable to reach the main village. After a few nights of teaching the people more about the Christian life they retraced their path back home.

Once the rains had subsided in December, the team went back in, minus Pin. They arrived at the village with little difficulty and were surprised to see such great change in only a few months absence. No one was sick, they had not offered sacrifices to the spirits and even they were beginning to build their homes out of wood rather than their bamboo and grass huts which have to be rebuilt every few years. God is truly at work, even when the village was unreachable to us. Transformation is not just about our effort, it is about God at work among his people.

Antioch Institute Strengthened

In December, two of our core leaders graduated with their Master's degrees from Bethany International University in Singapore after two years of hard work. Karony and Bopea come back anxious to help strengthen the Antioch Institute and expand our training ministries.

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