

Cambodian Servants

Words of Life Ministries:

Helping to Equip the Body of Christ in Cambodia and Beyond

July-August 2007



Steve in the USA



Steve visiting San Francisco on the way to the Airport



Shellsburg, Iowa Church

My Trip to the States in April went well. I was very busy, but that was the way I wanted it. I spoke to more than a dozen church groups about Cambodia in three weeks and traveled, by car, to seven states from Texas to Minnesota and back and two places in California. It was a wonderful time for me to get together with those who support and pray for me and the ministry. One great blessing on this trip was the collecting children's books and old laptop computers. I mailed back more than one thousand pounds of books and more than ten laptops were donated. Nearly all the books and computers came from Restoration Church in Dallas and River of Life Church in Kansas City. Both churches have schools, so I guess they knew first hand the importance of children's

books for children's education in Cambodia.

I especially enjoyed being back in the Midwest, especially Iowa where I am from, and speaking in the church my Dad was saved at in Shellsburg, Iowa. Being 150 years old I was surprised how good the church looked and how dedicated the congregation was. They have graciously supported many of the poor people in Cambodia by buying cows over the years.

Everywhere I went I was treated like a king and I am so grateful for everyone who spent time with me though it was only brief. As always I didn't have enough time to see as many people as I would have liked, so if you really want to see me, you better just to come see me in Cambodia!

Staff Retreat 2007



Words of Life Staff (almost all) in 2007

Words of Life Ministries is 10 years old this year. Seems like time just flies by. This year we spent a few days going to the beach so we could all relax, fellowship and dream about how God could use the ministry in the future. We set in place many new plans and ideas to not only strengthen the staff, but to do even more to help the church in Cambodia grow toward maturity.

In this issue:

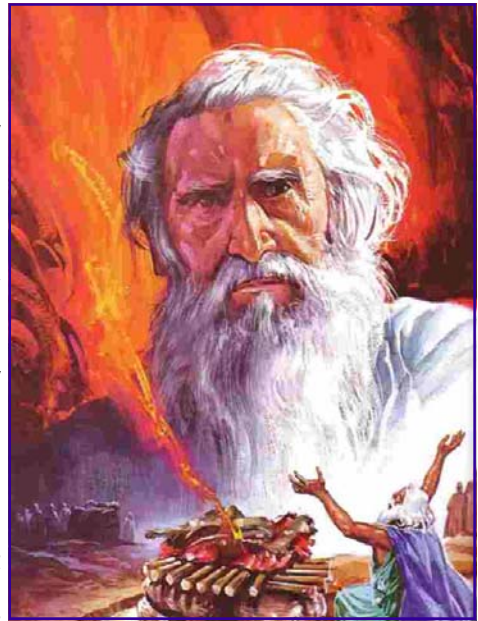
The Last Prophet	2-3
Prayer Points	4
Purpose Driven Life in Cambodian	4
Contact and Donation Information	4

Upcoming Travel:

- **July 30-August 4**
Teaching in Bethany International University, Singapore
- **August 5** Preaching in Christian Life Gospel Center, PJ, Malaysia
- **August 24-25**
Bible Translation meeting in Sen Dai, Japan
- **July** Pastors Training in Vietnam
- **August or September**
Antioch Institute Pastoral Training in the Philippines

The Last Prophet

I pulled out of the capital city of Phnom Penh by bus headed for Vietnam. Normally I would send out a prayer update for people to pray for me as I was going to conduct secret underground training and meet with underground church leaders. . . but I was not in the mood. On the long bus ride, I pretended to be a tourist, complete with MP3 player, camera and my beach attire. This was my "undercover" attire. I was contemplating quitting ministry and sulking over the loss of a long time staff member. No he didn't die. He gave me an ultimatum. His ultimatum was, "either double my salary and drop all my leadership responsibilities or I am going to quit." I wanted to kick him out the door. Financially I was not in a position to meet his demands, and morally I would not give into such a demand. He already received the third highest salary in the ministry, yet he was also not wanting any responsibilities. On the day he decided to quit he just didn't show up and sent me a text message on my phone literally saying, "nice knowing you over the last ten years. . . good bye." My emotions were indescribable. It was another bad day in a long string of bad days.



Elijah faced great miracles and great despair

For the last six months it seemed all I have heard is bad news. Churches splitting; pastors accusing other pastors of being "false prophets" from the pulpit; corruption in the church; missionaries deceiving donors for the sake of money and pride; staff leaving for higher paying jobs, or ones with easier workloads; pastors publicly falling into sin, yet remaining in ministry because they have all the power. . . on and on. It seems the window of opportunity in Cambodia seems to be closing fast and the church is the one who is shutting the door, not Satan. This disturbs me. I have Christian friends in other countries who seem more interested in seeking odd miracles rather than showing any interest in discipling people and sharing the gospel which is a clear mandate from Christ. This disturbs me too and all these things going on at once was overwhelming and dominated my thoughts. The demands of running a ministry with only twenty staff, yet reaching thousands of church leaders in numerous countries, raising nearly fifty children, plus the demands of my own family was just overwhelming.

I was heading to Saigon, which is only six hours away. I was discouraged the entire bus ride. I knew that I was heading into a communist country and I was going to be doing training secretly among Vietnamese church leaders. To top it off I got a call from a "friend" that I had not talked to in months. He called asking for money. When I crossed the border into Vietnam and through all the military and police security, I prayed, "Lord, I wouldn't mind being arrested and spend some time in jail. I could use a break."

That night I met my contact person and we made arrangements to go to the first training location the following day. I was followed and photographed going into the site, but the leaders told me they were only gathering information so not to worry. Honestly, I wouldn't have cared if they arrested me. I taught the whole day. It was a struggle to teach, and hot inside the small sealed room, but it was one of my favorite subjects so the training went well. The following morning I preached in an underground church, and the next day I taught another group of pastors in a second secret location. Everything went well.

When I was praying and trying to prepare myself for preaching in the underground church I felt led to the life of Elijah. Knowing that I was in a place where Christians are often persecuted I did not want to give them a negative message, but one of encouragement. At such a time it was extremely difficult to stay positive. As I examined the life of Elijah the Lord spoke to me in a fresh way.

We all remember the great things that happened in Elijah's life, especially the confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. It seems to sit well with our idea of success. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal (who outnumbered him by 450 to 1). He mocked them. And in the end the fire of God came down and consumed the sacrifice and altar and all the prophets of Baal were killed! What a victorious life! He is like a spiritual superman! A close look at the life of Elijah reveals something completely different. You can read about his life in 1 Kings chapters 17 to 21. He spends most of his life fighting (actually running from) Ahab and Jezebel, two very wicked people. In Chapter 17 he commands that Israel face a drought. It happened. What power! The result. . . he had to live in hiding, isolated in the desert! When he was there all alone, God did another great miracle. Ravens fed Elijah bread and meat and he drank from the brook. . . until the water dried up. Oops! So, God told him to go find a widow and ask her for water and food. To me that is down right rude. Shouldn't servants of God be helping widows, not expect them to help him. Anyway, you know the story: the widow offered her last meal to Elijah. God did another great miracle and she had enough bread and oil to cook many more meals. Wow, what a great miracle. . . but Elijah was still in hiding and a fugitive. Then the child died. That must be a very bad day. Can you imagine how he felt. Here, he not only was depending on this widow, but her son died.

The Last Prophet (Continued)

Sure, we know the end of the story. . . Elijah was able to bring the son back to life. Another great miracle. And no one saw it! He wasn't on the stage with spotlights beaming. . . he was in hiding, in the attic.

Then there is the great miracle on Mt. Carmel where God showed his great power and 450 prophets of Baal were killed! Praise God. Then Elijah told Ahab the drought would be stopped and it would rain. It did! Miracle after miracle happened. . . what a great life! And do you know what happened immediately after that. . . "Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. . . and he went alone to the desert." (1 Kings 19:3-4) There he begged God to kill him. Now that sounds like my life. Great miracles followed by great despair!

So now living in fear and isolated in the desert, God sent angels to feed him. Then he fasted for forty days and nights as he traveled to Mt. Sinai. He was walking through the desert with no food. This was not exactly the victorious Christian life I imagined! Standing before Mt. Sinai, God spoke to him, "What are you doing here?" Hey, that is not edifying and encouraging! Come on God! Elijah stood and tried to seek God. A massive windstorm came, probably something like a tornado. . . and God was not there. There was an earthquake, and God was not there. There was a fire, and also God was not there. With the power to do great miracles, you would think God would put on a great show! Nope. A gentle whisper came. Again, God said, "What are you doing here?" I can just see Elijah as he breaks down and cries, *"I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I alone am left, and now they are trying to kill me, too"* (1 Kings 19:14). Boo hoo hoo! Woe is me! I am all alone! Where are you God?

Later Elijah prophesied how Ahab and Jezebel would die, and before it even happened he was taken up to heaven in whirlwind. The life of Elijah is very sobering to consider. Elijah was dedicated, honest, and completely faithful to God. God did mighty miracles that have not since happened. Now, people get excited about a cured headache or spots on their digital cameras. Can you imagine fire coming down from heaven and the enemies of God being publicly killed! Wow! Yet, the private life of Elijah seems more like my life. He mostly felt isolated, living in the wilderness, fearing being killed.

My Dad didn't say much about the Vietnam war, but he told me about how war was many days of sheer boredom followed by seconds of exhilarating terror. I think the spiritual war is much the same. Somehow the American dream has taken over our theology. We think that servants of God should be well off, stay in fancy hotels, have a huge staff to meet their every need, preach in fancy church buildings and have incredible multi-media presentations. They are performers of the highest level. Their lives, public and private, are vibrant and exciting. Miracles? Well, the media presentation is really cool. . . so that will do! Healing? Well, have a good worship time on Sunday and on Monday find the best doctor money (your hard earned money) can buy. Sound cynical. Sorry. That is where I am at right now; deeply entrenched in reality! Praise God for the great miracles that have taken place. Praise God for his unending provisions. Why do I feel like Elijah in hiding and all alone? I have come to the realization that this is the normal Christian life.

The message I preached on Elijah was really for me. It left many questions unanswered in my own heart, but looking at the servants of God throughout the Bible it seems they all faced loneliness, despair, disappointment. . . even Jesus.

After I finished preaching, the pastor offered communion. It was nothing special. There was only one cheap keyboard playing a hymn and he read the verse of scripture from 1 Corinthians 11 which I have heard a thousand times before. There was no performance, no creativity, no melodic choir, no smoke and lights, they were just remembering the suffering of Christ. The wine was root beer and the bread was potato chips. They were desperately poor people. This was the best they could offer. As the pastor read the familiar passage tears rolled down from his face. I was stunned.

In all my years of sitting through communions I have seen it done a hundred ways. I have seen the most fancy and creative methods to redundant ritual, but never had I seen a pastor actually cry as he remembered the suffering of Christ. This is a pastor who knew what it is to suffer. As I sat there and thought of all my struggles, and all the great things that God had done in the past I was more certain than ever that this is the normal Christian life. None of the servants of God in the Bible had it easy. Most were rejected, killed, and often tortured. From the point of view of Elijah and most of the prophets of the Bible there is no such thing as a happy, prosperous, easy or "warm fuzzy" Christian life.

Elijah felt like he was the last prophet of God, and so did I, but it became clear in that underground church that I was not alone. I was encouraged as I left Vietnam. A multitude of problems were waiting for me, but I knew that God would always be with me as I tried to help people demonstrating Christ's love.

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (Romans 5:3-5).

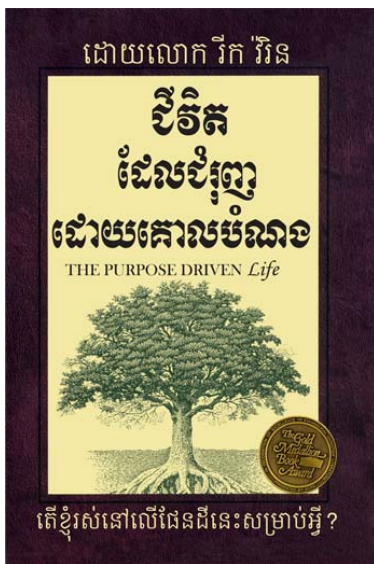
Prayer Points

- Pray for endurance and strength for all the staff of Words of Life Ministries to accomplish God's purposes in Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam.
- Pray for the need of raising nearly fifty children in the Kracheh Children's center.
- Pray for the training of Antioch Institute to be funded so that we can do more training in Cambodia and continue the existing training in the Philippines.
- Pray for the Hyde family. Steve needs a break. Noit is doing well. Anna just had her second birthday and Paul is seven and just completed first grade.
- Pray that our new house will be finished soon so that we can rest and recover from all the building activities.
- Pray for money for three church buildings which we have land for (about \$5,000 each).

(Training Update: *In the Philippines we are providing training for 125 pastors and church leaders who are running their own training sessions in their own tribes reaching more than one thousand others.*

In Cambodia, we are looking to launch 70 new branch schools of Antioch Institute which will provide training for more than two thousand others when we can get the funding together.

In Vietnam we have partnered with another school.)



Purpose Driven Life in Cambodian

There's just something about this book! We translated the book over four years ago, but we never printed it waiting for official permission. Eventually, we printed the book and are selling for the cost of printing. Already it is the fastest selling book in Cambodia! Having read the book, I was surprised that I personally didn't find much new or inspiring, but it certainly has hit a cord with a lot of people, so that is what is important. Anything that will get people to not think so much about themselves and think about God's purposes for their life is a good thing to me.

Words of Life Ministries, which originally started ten years ago to provide materials for the churches has now published more than two hundred different books, hundreds of short lessons, dozens of training DVD's and thousands of radio programs for the church in Cambodia. The Christian books stores in Cambodia are full of Words of Life books!

Contact and Donation Information



Steve Hyde
Words of Life Ministries
 Mail: P.O. Box 2581
 Phnom Penh, 3
 Kingdom of Cambodia
 Phone: (855) 23-224121
 E-mail: steve@asiaforjesus.com

If you would like to be added to e-mail updates you can register online at:
www.asiaforjesus.org

Donations:

For donations to Words of Life Ministries/ Antioch Institute send donations through the Church of Glad Tidings.

Church of Glad Tidings
 Mail: P.O. Box 1630
 Yuba City, California 95992
 USA
 Phone: (530) 671-3160
 E-mail: info@churchofgladtidings.com

Any checks sent to the church should be made out to "Church of Glad Tidings", but clearly marked FOR: "Words of Life Ministries".