

High Tower Ministries



March, 2005

Joom-ree-up-soo-a (Hello!) from Cambodia,

As this newsletter goes out we are very near the end of our first quarter on the field. That is hard for us to imagine because it "feels" like so much longer than 4 months. Our house certainly feels more like a home, school has restarted much to the dismay of the children, and our family is settling into more of a routine. Well, we are trying to anyway. Our new routine may be that nothing will ever be "routine" again!

Pastor Chuck McCaul with New Life emailed us before we left the US "I see you during the first six months getting to know us and finding your niche." Well, we can't really say that we have found our "niche" yet, but we have gotten to know them at New Life and realize that we are blessed to be a part of them.

December: Since our last newsletter went out Pastor Chuck asked Mark to take the time to find a van for New Life. God blessed Mark's efforts with the right van, at the right place, at the right time. Yea God! A very important need was met.

Mark is presently working on opening a roof-top cafeteria for the hundreds of students who go through the doors of New Life every day. Affordable, quick, and nutritious meals would be such a blessing to the students, teachers, and staff. The cafeteria is to serve a dual purpose also. It is to be used as a "training" opportunity to allow students to learn proper food handling, customer service, and many other job skills.



Children listen to their first Bible story

January: Due to a delay in our crates arriving our 200 Christmas bags were distributed in January. However, that didn't hamper the orphan's enjoyment. Later that month when another well-known ministry delivered their shoeboxes in Phnom Penh, we wondered if this ministry was needed. To our delight, we discovered that the orphanages we delivered High Tower Christmas bags to had not received any shoeboxes. Thank you for your generosity... children would have been empty-handed. Watch for announcements of this year's Christmas bag project soon. It is never too early to begin gathering supplies for the collection in July.



Interpreted by Malice

During our initial visits at AOA and KAOA orphanages we found grave situations. The orphanages were already a great source of concern... the adoption suspension combined with the famine in Cambodia has made things very difficult to even meet basic needs. We are so pleased to report the generosity of our home church, Bykota Ministries, as they have pledged additional funds for the orphanages.



While on our very first visit to KAOA we also found a very sick baby girl with a heart defect. The situation with this precious baby, Srey Neang, was not so easy to fix. It was a full month of Rhonda submitting appeals to both Cambodian and American governments. Asking for and receiving a visa for a child from an orphanage is not easy. Srey Neang is presently in Neosho, Missouri continuing to improve with proper care as she awaits open-heart surgery. Her surgery is on hold until after she has gained some much-needed strength. She stayed under our care for the two weeks prior to traveling to the US. She wasn't the same baby when she left as she was when she arrived. God has a great destiny in store for Srey Neang.



February: Before Mark even returned from taking Srey Neang for medical care, our home began to enjoy a two-week visit with a family from Wisconsin. This family had traveled with their two adoptive Cambodian daughters to revisit their birth mom and brother. Pictured left to right is LaLynn, Dana, Erica, Jay, Jan, Linda, and Sovanne





The brother, LaLynn, was in a great deal of pain that was found to be four abscessed teeth. Without going into gory detail, suffice it to say that Cambodian dental care is not what we are accustomed to in the West. It is more along the lines of "frontier dentistry" when the barber pulled early American settlers' teeth.

We were very privileged to play a part in making his life more bearable. The greatest privilege of all though, came the next week when the birth mother, Sovanne, prayed the prayer of salvation with a New Life pastor. Later in their bedroom here at our home, LaLynn prayed the same prayer with his mother.



Left: Linda has me take her to buy rice for AOA orphanage and this little sixteen year old girl shows me up by sticking it out until she bargained the price down an additional 25cents per 50 kilo.

Right: Maybe it was due in part to sitting out the rolling black-outs with us, but Jay and Jan found an excellent way to demonstrate their appreciation when they blessed us with this wonderful generator powered by a small diesel car engine.



Our dear sweet Dany came to know the Lord in December, Srey Neang was granted permission to travel in January, Sovanne and LaLynn came to know the Lord in February. Words just cannot express our feelings. We know we are still finding our "niche", still struggling through daily Khmer language lessons, still trying to adapt to life in a Third World country, but still the Lord sees fit to use us in some way.

Sovanne's new relationship with the Lord is of another particular importance. She has now returned back to her village in province. This particular province, this particular village has been prayed over by New Life church planters for some time now and they were just waiting for one new convert... one new believer to give them an open door to start a new church plant. Sovanne had heard about Jesus from an unknown team some years ago when evangelists "on big motorcycles" came through her village. Pastor Chuck watered that seed both Sundays she was in attendance at New Life with our family. Dany watered that seed while she spoke with Sovanne over lunch preparations each day. We watered that seed as Sovanne watched us care for her and her son with no other motive or thought of gain other than to Be Ye Kind One To Another. Then one day at lunch when Dany interpreted a testimony that Mark shared with the family, that seed burst into full life. What an intricate puzzle the Father put together to complete this final picture of salvation.

February ended with an exciting surprise. Upon returning from the airport to drop off the family from Wisconsin, Phanny met us with a dilemma. His uncle, a farmer in a province hit hard with the famine, had sent his oldest child into Phnom Penh to try to make it on her own. Phanny went to pick up his cousin and didn't know anything else to do but to bring her home with him. We are so honored to be right here where God needed us to be for this young lady. Roy, is a charming 17 year old girl. She doesn't have any English ability, little schooling, and no job skills. There aren't many acceptable options for young girls her age. Pastor Chuck's son, Jesse McCaul has been trying to open the first women's dorm with New Life as the men's dorms are full and used so effectively. So we simply put fresh sheets on Sovanne's bed and Roy became a new member of our household. She is already enrolled in English classes, working side by side with our Dany learning domestic skills for employment, and is plugged in to a small group at New Life. Please pray for Roy's understanding of Christ's love for her and the Lord's desire for relationship with her. Also please pray for the women's dorm. Roy has a home here with us as long as needed, but there are many more such girls out there who are not as fortunate.

As we move through March and into April we are entering our first experience of the hottest time of the Cambodian year. It is a season when sickness often abounds and reports of bird flu surround us. Please pray:

- for the health and safety of the orphans at UNACAS, AOA, and KAOA orphanages.
- for the New Life Church planters as they step into Sovanne's village to begin a new work and for the needed \$150 a month to sponsor this provincial outreach.
- for the hand of God and His favor and wisdom to continue to be with our family
- on a personal note: initial plans are being made for our son, Steven, to visit for the month of June. It has been very hard being away from Beki and Steven. Please pray that all plans: timing, finances, and details fall into place.

Finally, as we close this newsletter the sounds of a Buddhist funeral chant are wafting through our open windows and doors. This is the third funeral within hearing range of our home this week. Each four day celebration signifies a soul entering everlasting torment. For that lost soul, it is too late.

PLEASE PRAY FOR CAMBODIA'S LOST

With all our love

Mark and Rhonda Benz, Kati, Dani, Isaac, Seth, Christopher, Chantal