

## Cambodia Mission Report May - Sep 2008

This is the wet season and most evenings we have torrential down pours along with spectacular thunder and lightening. At least the rain is warm here. The streets are flooded for a couple of hours but with the sewage system overwhelmed its contents spew into the streets. We have sometimes to walk home from the church centre up to our knees in this. The next day, the water has gone but brown sediment is left on the roads and then this dries and is blown about in the form of dust. It's no wonder there are so many chest infections - it is a miracle that these infections are easily cleared up with a course of antibiotics. These and many other prescription type drugs are routinely bought over the counter at any of the numerous street pharmacies.

Some evenings we have electric storms where there is no rain but lightening flashes in the sky in what seems like Morse code above and between the clouds. It is very spectacular and very beautiful.

Getting soaked with rain is just part of life here. Often locals go outside their homes and stand (fully clothed) under the torrents of water that pour from the roofs. There is no gutter or downspout system on houses here. The water just runs onto the streets, but then, the water is never really cold here. Most Khmei don't use soap to shower, although they do shower frequently and never in directly heated water. Their skin seems so healthy and I have yet to detect body odour from anyone here (except for the Ad-Chy - more about them later).

Frogs and toads in the field beside our home seem to remain dormant and in active in the dry spells but when it rains they come to life and croak and sing all night long. Their chorus penetrates even our bedroom - a welcome relief from the tinnitus that I have contracted since coming here.

Our church centre floods after a particularly heavy rain. First the front car park area fills then the water moves slowly into the centre itself. Anything that can be damaged by water must be stored off the ground especially electric wires, extension leads and steel or wood products. Recent visitors from our home Church, the Ulster Temple, Belfast, decorated and equipped a new office in our building, and made sure everything was protected from the water. The new church office is a vital facility. It allows the ever-growing administration burden to be dealt with in relative comfort.

Since our last report we have had a number of visitors. In May we had Jonny Adams, John Raftery and Luke Derbyshire from various Elim Churches in the UK. In August we had Laura



**Heavy rain always results in flooding near our church centre**



**Visit to our church by a ministry team from upstate New York.**



**A little Ad-Chy boy exhausted and asleep on the street.**

Best, Rebecca Kerr and Mark Elliott all from the Ulster Temple followed shortly by Irene Thorne again from the mainland UK. We have been so blessed by our visiting groups. Each of them has had an impact upon us and the local Khmei and by all accounts we and the Khmei have had a profound effect upon them. Ann and I would like to thank them here for all their hard work and generosity.

Ann's health has become a matter of concern. A high blood calcium condition, which existed before we came to the mission field, has unexpectedly developed to the stage where she must have surgery. The operation is on her hyperthyroid gland in her neck. We have little choice but to have the procedure done in Bangkok. Sadly, it is an expensive operation and our health insurance does not cover this pre-existing condition. The hospital will be Bumrungrad - one of the best in the region. Please pray for Ann.

Our various church ministries are healthy and growing and there are some new developments in our outreach programme. The Khmei Church has grown to steady upper twenties attendance. The teaching and worship is good and we can see these new young Khmei Christians grow. A change of leadership here - Ann now heads up this church, for a while at least. The International Church continues to grow. Around 50 adults and an amazing 20 to 25 children are quite common now. Consequently we have moved our Sunday Khmei and International services to Hope International School where we have a lot more room for growth and the facilities are excellent. We thank the Board of Governors at the school for their kindness at only asking for around \$25 all in for the whole Sunday morning services. We can have Junior and Senior Sunday school in separate rooms and air conditioning in the main sanctuary... Wow!

We have established a weekly Church Prayer Meeting and the Home Fellowship and Bible Study Group continue to meet in member's homes.

Please pray for the church, as God seems to be raising it up a place for local Christians where they can have a sound church and fellowship.

The English classes continue to thrive. It's not uncommon for between 70 and 90 students to come for free English lessons. We have established an attendance card system whereby students will be awarded attendance certificates if they attend 80% of the classes. This necessitates their attendance at a number of English from the Bible classes. We have also established a new meeting on Sunday evenings where the emphasis is on the Bible rather than the English.



Having a chat with some Ad-Chy children on the Steung Meanchey dump.



This old woman in one of our villages had a badly ulcerated leg. After some treatment from our team it healed up nicely.



Group photo at the centre. Irene Thorne had a great impact on how the staff go about teaching the children.

Several young Khmei men and women have given their hearts to the Lord and in turn are attending the Khmei church. Just recently at the start of one of these classes I said, as I always do, that we would be learning English using the Bible, giving them the option to stay or go, no one ever goes. But on this occasion one young woman said to me "Teacher, what is bible?" I said in my heart "It's why we're here!"

Please pray for the English teaching outreach. I'm happy to say I get help with some classes from two teachers from Hope school and who are members of our church. I thank the Gifts for Life ministry for their support with English books etc.

And now for the Ad-Chy. The AD-Chy is a part a Phnom Penh Khmei society who are profoundly poor. They remind me of the Untouchables of India but the Ad-Chy are excluded exclusively for their abject poverty They trawl the streets constantly, picking up re-cyclable materials in their hand carts and then selling them for pennies to recycling companies. On a good day pulling a cart for perhaps 10 or 11 hours in the heat or rain might get them 6000 Riel - around 75 p.

I befriended one 13-year-old Ad-Chy girl who came to the church gate for materials and she unusually asked for a drink of water. After a couple of visits she expressed an interest in schooling but her mother could not afford to send her. She and three of her friends now come every Friday morning for school lessons in the Elim Church Centre. We also give them water and fruit about 25p each to make up for lost income. They simply love the civilized haven of the church centre grounds where there are some swings and a couple of basketball hoops and a ball. Now they have their own textbooks, jotters, pencils and rubbers for the first time. To see their eagerness to learn and their smiles at the opportunity to get a form of education is very moving. They are not clean as they forage in the dumps of Phnom Penh so we teach them outside where he put some tables and chairs. But they are the loveliest young people and we pray that this ministry grows and the opportunity will come along when we can share our faith with them.

A new development in the education front is the development of a new computer room in the centre. We teach English and we teach our trainee girls all the skills associated with day care and managing a home as a housekeeper but we want to widen their prospects and also bring more students and AD-Chy in to the centre to learn keyboard and computer skills. As Phnom Penh develops as a young city, more and more companies will be paying good salaries for skilled computer literate, English and Khmei speaking young people. Our pilot computer classes will be



**Our first Ad-Chy student, Narome**



**The evening English classes are doing very well. Supplying**



**Recently we had general elections. Here, three of our girls sport their dyed fingers, which is done to help ensure one person - one vote!**



**Begging at the side at a major road junction**

free but a small fee to cover most of the salary of a computer teacher is planned in the future. We are excited about this development and I am happy to say that the Ulster Temple has expressed a desire to fund the setup of the computer suite.

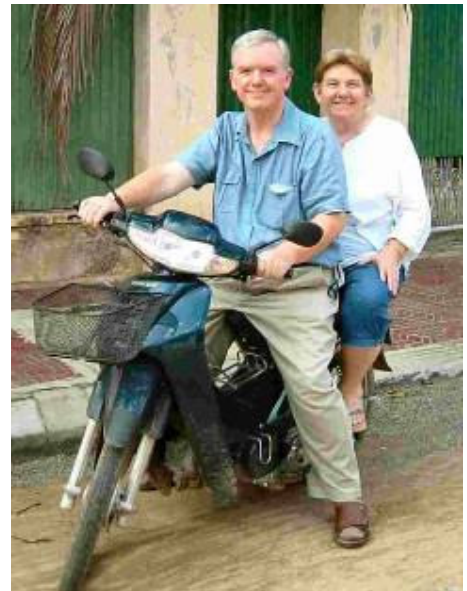
We continue our love affair with Steung Meanchey, the notorious rubbish dump area of the city. We go there every other Saturday morning. We teach the children games teach them about Jesus and have them do colouring in etc.; we bring medical help to those who need it and also bring simple everyday resources to them such as whistling kettles, saucepans, candles, water boots and toys for the children. We bring food and we teach them about God. Many of their huts are in need of repair, especially the roofs. We have been given some money for this and are currently replacing 6 roofs and rebuilding, totally, one hut belonging to and old married couple.

It's a dreadfully sad place to visit. Many of the residents seem to be stunned by their poverty and hopeless state. They often spend hours simply sitting inside their huts gazing out through their doorway. They have a lifeless gaze about them, I think born of the hopeless poverty and squalor of their existence. We are happy to bring something to them, not least of which, is the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have come to know us now and trust us - they love a hug like everyone else.

Food is a constant issue as the price of rice as gone up considerably. A cruel blow to these people as rice is by no means a luxury - it's survival. Two or three visits ago I was amazed that one group of residents were roasting what looked like a small deer on a fire. However, on closer inspection I discovered it was a dog - a young Alsatian, I think.

Talking of roasting, a few months back, our housekeeper put a couple of rounds of bread in the toaster, for my breakfast - just like home, but after a few moments we realized that it didn't smell like toasted bread. In the toaster was a Gecko - a small wall lizard - they're everywhere here. This poor little creature was in toaster looking for the breadcrumbs and it got toasted. It smelt quite good actually - a bit like fried snake...I think I'll stop there in case you're eating soon!

The day care centre is doing well and with around 27 children and a considerable waiting list the Elim Day Care centre has a great reputation in Phnom Penh. The workers are amazing - all are Christians and they pour love into the lives of our children every day. Our parents are so appreciative of the way they show tender care of their children. They get regular training in all aspects of childcare.



**We use the church motorbike for short journeys and of course we always wear our helmets!**



**Khmei church fellowship evening in our home.**



**Our Ad-Chy students at the gate of the church centre**

The last of our trainee girls leaves in November, the year is up. Two of them have found jobs and another is staying with us longer, I think indefinitely, as she is still only sixteen and needs a good Christian environment where she is safe. Three young men raped her when she was only 14 years old. Elim has proved to be a safe sanctuary for her. We have arranged for supporting agencies to counsel her and to give her professional help while she works for Elim.

I thank you for your prayers and to those who support us financially here in Phnom Penh. It would not be possible to touch so many lives without your dedication and generosity. Ministering in a city is expensive and as the price of oil increased so did the price of everything else here, and, as at home, prices stay up even if the price of fuel levels off or drops. Please continue to support us. With your donations and support you are touching lives and reaching out with the Gospel into a community of Buddhists. What you do is so vital for us. If you feel that you would like to begin to support the work here contact Elim HQ.

I would ask you to pray for good health. I recently attended the funeral of a 10 year old Khmei girl who died of Dengue Fever - two people in our church have it at the moment - there is no inoculation nor is there a significant treatment. You contract it from mosquito bites - and we get lots of those.

Pray for Ann and her forthcoming operation and that God will provide the money for this.

Pray that God will continue to use Elim as a denomination here. John Glass, our General Superintendent, recently wrote in the Elim Direction magazine "Success is More than Numbers and that God is more concerned about our sending capacity than our seating capacity." Our vision in Phnom Penh Elim is to send out and reach out to these amazing people and to present to them that Christ was crucified for each of them.

Soon, it will be the Festival of Pchum Benh where around 75% of the Khmei residents of the city will go back to the villages of their families and ancestors. It's an obligation. However, it does present special difficulties and challenges to our Christian young people and Christian staff as they find themselves meeting with relatives who are often hostile at their perceived betrayal of their indigenous faith. They also find themselves having to attend rituals in pagodas and temples.

Pray for their protection and witness.

Please pray that others will see that they are different and have something very special.

Pray that they will display the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in abundance. As the fruit in the local markets here in Phnom Penh is



**The things you see on moto's**



**Village children at prayer.**



**Taxi - Phnom Penh style!**

so good and delicious and desirable so we pray that our Christian young people and staff will display, by the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control - in abundance this also be will admired and desired.

Please feel free to visit this photo website where I have made many of my photographs available for you to see. [www.picasaweb.google.co.uk](http://www.picasaweb.google.co.uk). Including these report photos in higher resolution format. Please feel free to use them for God's work. You can also read the latest news and issues concerning the mission on our new Blogsite - [www.johnann460.blogspot.com](http://www.johnann460.blogspot.com)

Bless you,  
John and Ann Turner



One of our villages in the suburbs of the city.



The Ulster Temple team making an assessment of immediate needs in one of the villages.



Anyone for fried tarantula?



Phnom Penh is a beautiful place.



In some parts of the city centre street monkeys are a common sight.

To contact John &/or Ann Turner directly send to PO Box 477, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Or E-mail [jtsat@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jtsat@tiscali.co.uk). All gifts towards our work in Cambodia should be marked "for the Turners" either personal or ministry and sent to Elim International Missions, PO Box 38, Cheltenham GL50 3HN, England. Cheques payable to (Elim International Missions) Charity number 251549 (England) and SCO37754 (Scotland). Bless You.