

The newsletter  
of Adventist  
Southeast  
Asia  
Projects

# ASAP

*ADVENTIST SOUTHEAST ASIA PROJECTS*

March/April, 2004



**The Challenge—  
Be a Church  
Planter**

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**Pal Sopheap (left) is a church planter in Borei Keila District, Phnom Penh. Hang Dara (right) is district pastor and trainer of pioneer church planters in Phnom Penh. Read more of their work on page 12.**

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Adventist Southeast Asia Project’s purpose is to support the preaching of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ through church planting and evangelism endeavors for Southeast Asian people throughout the world. As a privately funded nonprofit organization, we work as a supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As an unaffiliated independent ministry, we are dependent upon God to move people to support this work. For information write to **Adventist Southeast Asia Projects, PO Box 84, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.** (Tax-deductible contributions may be sent with the enclosed envelope.) Our telephone #: 269-471-3026. Our fax #: 269-471-3034. Our e-mail: [asap84@cs.com](mailto:asap84@cs.com). ASAP web page information that is maintained and updated by Sereivudh Ly can be found at: <http://www.tagnet.org/asap>. We would love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

# Editor's Update

... by Judy Aitken



*The Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; . . . that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified” (Isaiah 61:1, 3).*

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**T**his newsletter issue can be summed up by two popular buzz words in evangelism today: church planting. ASAP is committed to planting churches among Southeast Asians in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and to those who have immigrated to North America. For the past fifteen years – seven years as Refugee Projects with Adventist Frontier Mission and eight years as Adventist Southeast Asia Projects, we have made it a priority to enter regions unreached with the gospel. Into these areas we send national pastors and Bible workers who have outstanding success in reaching their people for Christ and raising up churches. Literally, hundreds of churches have been established as a result of the prayer and support of ASAP donors. Truly, God’s Kingdom is being built – person by person, church by church.

We have often been asked, “What is your secret? What are the keys to success in church planting?” In reflecting on the way God has blessed our efforts, I attribute our success to the following: 1) All the prayers and support from ASAP donors. 2) ASAP’s support of national workers who are native to the country for which they work, who speak the language and understand the culture and social customs, thereby being able to explain the gospel from that particular culture’s perspective. 3) ASAP working closely with the

local SDA missions (who supervise the national workers). 4) Hiring national pastors when the opportunity presents itself who have converted to Adventism. We have found that they have already established trust with their congregations and often bring most of their members with them when they convert. 5) The national pastors genuinely caring about their people and providing humanitarian aid on a one-to-one basis when the need presents itself. 6) The national pastors encouraging their members to share their joy in Jesus with others. Many churches have begun by members sharing the gospel with their friends and neighbors.

In your prayers this evening, lift your voices to heaven in praise for the way God continues to bless ASAP’s role in supporting the planting of Adventist churches where the gospel is being heard for the first time.


**Vietnam:** Since the takeover of Communism in 1975, we are not aware of any new SDA churches planted. That has all changed and a breakthrough has been realized. Ten years ago Isah Young began a SDA radio ministry. That has been the catalyst that began the first house church and has been at the forefront of the house church movement. To this day, communist restrictions prohibit proselytizing. For this reason, SDA churches planted in Vietnam are unique

in that they are “secret” or “underground” house churches consisting of approximately 20-30 people. There are currently more than 45,000 SDA members meeting in more than 2,000 house churches on a weekly basis. This number is growing at an astonishing rate. ASAP works closely with the radio ministry by providing financial support for all 233 of the courageous pastors - men and women who are committed church planters. They are passionate about establishing new house churches as well as supporting and nurturing the thousands of existing ones.

**Cambodia:** For more than fifteen years ASAP has supported Cambodian pastors in planting churches throughout their country. The results? A strong base of 131 churches. The Cambodia SDA Mission reports 4,534 baptized members to date. With ASAP donor support the number is growing rapidly in this impoverished country. People are receptive to the gospel. The pastors have an amazing ability to know what their people need and with ASAP’s help, use a variety of techniques in planting churches. For example, many wells have been built in needy villages and conveniently, these wells (places of social gatherings) are located next to our SDA churches. While there have been great gains in church planting there is also much potential for further growth as reported on page 7. When pastor Hang Dara (see page 12) was asked what the secret to his success in church planting is, he replied, “My success is not the method I use but the Holy Spirit that is sent by God the Father. The Holy Spirit blesses my simple methods. These methods I learned from Christ - showing compassion, making friends first and winning the people’s heart by personal effort. After they have confidence in us we help them look to Jesus as their personal Savior.”

**Laos and Thailand:** We are excited about the opportunities given us last year to work with the Thailand SDA Mission in church planting. ASAP donors now support ten pastors from northeast Thailand who are committed church planters. These men are former pastors who converted to Adventism and are now working to build up SDA churches. Many of their former members have eagerly embraced Adventism as well. ASAP is also active in Laos (Thailand’s neighbor) by supporting six Lao pastors/ committed church planters.

**North America:** ASAP has been asked to partner with the Houston Central Church in planting a church among Vietnamese people in Texas. Phong Nguyen, pastor to the Vietnamese group, shares more on page 14. ASAP has always been involved in supporting church planting among Southeast Asians who have immigrated to North America. Today, ASAP donors support five pastors who are planting new churches among Southeast Asian ethnic groups in North America.

We rely heavily on your prayers for the continued success of church planting. Please continue to keep close to your heart ASAP’s mission of planting churches - winning people to Christ who then become “trees of righteousness” for the glory of God. 

# Letters

## FROM ASAP READERS

In our September/October 2003 issue of the newsletter, we reported on the underprivileged children living on the outskirts of Phnom Penh who are being ministered to by church planters, Chong Soheat and Sorya Ouk. These kids live by digging through trash at the large city dump. Here's what Wayne Cherrier of Maine had to say: "My bottle/can business is real good. A lot of people save bottles and cans for me. On Sunday I found a large barrel full of bottles and cans. I am thrilled about collecting cans and bottles to get food money for the dump kids of Phnom Penh. I would like to say to the people who read your newsletter, 'Join me in collecting returnable cans and bottles to get money for food for the dump children of Phnom Penh!'"


*Way to go, Wayne! We applaud your efforts. Every penny counts – and goes a long way in Cambodia.*

Long-time missionary to Asia, Winston Clark, wrote, "It is nice to read what is

happening in the Vietnam-Cambodia-Laos area and the way the Lord is so richly blessing in the work there. It is especially remarkable when one thinks of how slowly the gospel moved a few short years earlier. The Lord has surely brought you 'to the kingdom for such a time as this.' We shall keep you and ASAP in our prayers."

We also received a note from Lydia Desamito, stating that her precious cat had passed away due to an accident.

*All of us here at ASAP have experienced the loss of a pet and send our sympathy and appreciation for your gift given in your pet's memory.*

We love to hear from our donors even if it is a note scribbled on the bottom of the enclosed response envelope. We know you are praying for ASAP and want you to know that we also hold the prayer requests you send us up to the Lord in our morning worships. So please do not hesitate to drop us a line. 



## In Loving Memory



We would like to thank Paul and Ruth Watson for their gift given in memory of Rueben Sprengel.

We also sincerely thank Ella May Stoneburner for her gift given in memory of Reville Burr.

We send our appreciation to the Wiese family for the gift given in memory of Dorothy Whitehead, teacher to Phuket, Thailand.

We send our deepest sympathy and look forward to a reunion in heaven when we hear Christ's words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

## Gifts Still Needed for 2003-2004 (fy)

### **Vietnam**

Salaries and training for 233 pastors	57,547
Evangelism, Bibles, literature, children's ministries	36,714
Transportation (mopeds) for district pastors	10,000
Peace & Happiness radio ministry	36,378
Humanitarian needs	9,840

### **Cambodia**

Lay pastor's stipend, travel and training	15,608
Evangelism supplies (Bibles, Bible lessons, etc)	9,836
Temporary churches and teaching centers	77,548
Women and youth ministries	2,068
Humanitarian – rice, food and 20 wells @ \$120	5,817
Kampong Cham Church School & building	22,000
Literacy schools and teachers	5,721
Tuition assistance for children at SDA schools	13,570
Church planters and pioneers	50,580
Phnom Penh Church and school building	30,000

### **Laos**

Salaries for six pastors @ \$250/mo	9,792
Evangelism materials (Bibles, Bible lessons, etc)	2,430
Humanitarian	5,000

### **Thailand**

Ten lay pastors @ \$50/mo & tribal workers	9,178
Mission College outreach projects	3,000
Children's ministries	1,488
Church building in NE Thailand	Thank you – Completed

### **North America**

Vietnamese and Laotian pastors/church planters	32,800
Evangelism and Khmer radio ministry	19,780

# Plant a Seed, Build a Church

by Gary Rogers

There are more than 100 district level cities in Cambodia with the Adventist Church only working in about twenty of them. Church planting teams could be sent to each of these district centers, lay families could be trained as church planters and new groups could be started. At this time Cambodians are open and receptive to Christianity, but the church in Cambodia is very poor with most members having a subsistence lifestyle. Without outside financial help the church in Cambodia is unable to fund new projects and outreach activities.

Cambodia Adventist Mission has sent an urgent request for funds to support five church planting projects. Three of these projects are featured in this newsletter. The first project is among Lao speaking villagers living along the Thailand border. The second project is for the northern province of Preah Vihear and the third project is in a very poor district of Phnom Penh—Borei Keila.

## Lao speaking villages in Cambodia

Twenty-five thousand Lao speaking people live in nineteen villages located along the Thailand border inside Cambodia. They are asking us for Christian teachers to help



**Seng Makara and Kanha stand with their children. They are planting churches in Lao villages in Cambodia.**

them know God. For many years these villages have been neglected by the Cambodian government. During the Khmer Rouge years Buddhism among the Lao people was destroyed and all temples demolished. The present Cambodian government has not provided these villages with any schools or public services.



**Em Vichan and Nov Rotha, church planters in Cambodian Lao villages.**

Three years ago Global Mission supported a couple - Seng Makara and his wife, Kanha, to begin church planting in this area.

Two years later another couple, Em Vichan and his wife, Nov Rotha, joined the project. Since funding of this project is no longer available the Cambodia Adventist Mission is now asking ASAP to support this rapidly growing church planting project that is taking place in these Lao villages.

The two couples are doing excellent work for God in three of the nineteen villages. A village school has been established in Takong village where they teach literacy classes. A church has also been planted in this village where fifty-two people have been baptized. There are approximately seventy-five people who worship on Sabbath. ASAP donors may remember helping Weimar College students raise funds to build a church in this village. The church planters also are holding evangelistic meetings each evening and on weekends. The Lord has blessed. In addition to the church planted in Takong village, the team is preaching the gospel in three other villages.

With ASAP's support this year the two couples are entering the new village of Balang with the gospel. Evangelistic meetings are being held each evening where many come to hear the gospel. Four hundred people are asking for Christian teachers to come and teach literacy classes. It is expected that, like the success seen in other villages, this village and the 400 people asking to know God, will become a strong church.

More than 70% of Cambodians and Laotians believe that disease is caused by evil spirits. When SDA church planters enter a village they often begin by telling the people



**Prak Sopha (left) and Korn Noeum (right) are church planting in Preah Vihear Province. Sum Ngeth, district pastor of Kampong Thom sits in the center.**

of a caring, loving God who has power to heal and help. Initially such an approach is often ignored, but when the church planters persist in talking about a powerful, loving God more often than not the villagers will point to a chronically ill person or a demonized person and say, “If your God is so powerful let your God help that person.” Over and over again God has healed and set people free, thereby giving a powerful demonstration of God’s power and love with the result that people then become open to hearing the gospel.

### **Preah Vihear Province**

Preah Vihear Province is a Buddhist stronghold with much opposition and persecution of Christians. This church planting project involves work in Rovieng City and the provincial capital of Tbeng Mean Chey.

ASAP, working in partnership with the Cambodia SDA Mission, sponsored Korn Noeum and his wife as church planters. Since beginning work three years ago, the Lord has blessed them to plant a strong church in the city of Rovieng, Preah Vihear Province. This courageous couple has worked tirelessly to beat the odds against them and has made great headway.

Recently, forty people from the couple’s classes were baptized. Korn Noeum and his wife are also teaching God’s Word to many interested people in four other nearby villages where they use a DVD player to show evangelistic sermons prepared by ASI. Each evening Korn Neoun and his wife set up their equipment which consists of a small PA system, an electric piano, two small lights, a 150 amp truck battery and electrical inverter for power supply because there is no electricity in the villages. They also hook up

a 20" color TV and the DVD player donated by ASI. At 6:00 pm the meeting begins with youth from the city church singing three songs accompanied by Korn's son on the piano. As the people of the village hear the music blaring over the loud speaker they come - all 200-300 of them. A thirty-minute Bible story video is shown followed by a special music number. One of the group then gives the evangelistic sermon. Finally a ten minute portion of the Jesus DVD is put on the screen. By the time the program ends it is 9:00 pm. The people cannot get enough. At the end of each program they call out for more, more. When Korn Noeum and his wife finish the evangelism series in one village, they go on to the next. In each village they find people who are eager to listen and know the true God.

I met with Korn Noeum three weeks ago and asked him to give me an opinion on the benefit of using the DVD as an evangelism tool. He told me that it was great and his Sabbath attendance in the village churches is increasing. Also, those who accept Christ are doing much to witness and spread the gospel as well.

For example, Prak Sopha was taught the Bible by Oun Sokhorn, a church planter and part of the team with Korn Noeum in Preah Vihear Province. He is now working as a church planter with the team and sharing the gospel in the capital city of Law Utt and also three different villages nearby. His testimony is shared on page 11.

The church planters are making a powerful impact for Christ. Your support makes it

possible. Your support takes Christ to villages, cities and towns where they are hearing of Him for the first time. Thank you for planting a church in Cambodia. Thank you for your support.

What it takes to support a church planting couple for one month—

Stipend per person \$65 - for a couple: \$130

Evangelism supplies: \$65

Travel expenses: \$40

House rent for two families: \$40

Medical expenses: \$20

Total monthly expenses: \$295 



**Gary Rogers is the Cambodia Adventist Mission Global Mission representative and mission builder. Mr. Rogers has spent eight years in Cambodia designing and building churches, coordinating the logistics, purchasing supplies and training a great building crew.**

# Dreams **DO** Come True


by Prak Sopha (as told to Gary Rogers)

**A** couple of years ago before I became a Christian I dreamed that I saw three angels flying in the heavens. The angels called people to believe in the true God. Later I began studying the Bible with an Adventist pastor in Preah Vihear Province. When I studied about the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, I had confidence that God had led me to the true church. My pastor prayed to ask God to heal a serious disease that I had. God answered with great power to give me healing.

After that I began sharing with everyone I met to tell them what God did for me. I loved to talk about Jesus and bring others to church. My family joined me in telling others about Jesus. God blessed my family by making it possible for us to go to the four month training session at the SALT Center in Siem Reap to train to be a church planter. Upon completion of our Bible and evangelism training my wife, son and I returned to our district to begin work as church planters.

I was filled with worries. I said to my wife, "Maybe we won't be able to find anyone who will want to hear the story of Jesus." We spent a lot of time thinking and planning what we would say and what we would do to reach the people in our village. My wife finally told me to stop worrying so much about how people would respond to the gospel. "Our job," she said, "is to share God's power and leave the results to God." So we got down on our knees and in a prayer of dedication we told God that all we are and all that we have we dedicate to Him. Then we asked Him to open doors so we might share the gospel and to help us as we share it.

God has answered that prayer. He made it possible for us to go to places that we could never have imagined. We share the good news of Jesus in the offices of government officials, the police station, the military outpost and the local prison. People are listening to the gospel story and people are accepting Jesus as their Savior - in some of the most unusual places, even in places like the local prison.

With joyful hearts my wife and I want to praise our wonderful God for the amazing things He is doing in our village. Please join us in praising God for His blessings on our work in planting churches for Him. 



**The author, thirty-four-year-old Prak Sopha, was one of many Bible students studying in the Preah Vihear church planting project. (see page 10). He and his wife stand with their son, in front of a church in Tbeng Mean Chey in Preah Vihear Province.**

# Church Planting in Cambodia

by Hang Dara

**H**ang Dara, district pastor in Phnom Penh who works in training Cambodian church planters, was interviewed by ASAP personnel. He reports on the church planting project in Borei Keila District, Phnom Penh.

**Tell us, Pastor Hang Dara, what you have noticed about the way the Adventist church has grown in Cambodia.**

I thank God for how He has blessed church growth in my homeland. When I returned from studying theology at Spicer College, I began working with the church members to train them according to their culture and experiences. This was not difficult because many people naturally already want to share the Bible with others. Because of prayer and excitement from Cambodian people to tell others about God, our church keeps growing.

**What are the methods you use to teach students to reach people for Christ?**

God blesses me to not only establish people in their faith but also to motivate them to bear witness to the power of God in their lives. My methods come from Jesus Christ in the Bible. I first emphasize to them to look to Jesus, to love Him and experience His love for them. Emphasis is also placed on how to accept the new life Jesus offers through His power. I am most familiar with my own Cambodian culture, so I teach what is compatible with our customs. For ex-

ample, I teach them to go house to house to make friends with the people. We talk about ways to listen to the people and their problems and then in a kind Christian manner, offer words of comfort. I think it is important to have hearts of compassion for people in need. One way this is done is by sharing rice to those who do not have any.

**Tell us about the new church planting project in Borei Keila District.**

Our goal was to train interested people to plant churches in new areas of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The students were divided into 15 areas of Phnom Penh and then sent out in pairs according to the Bible principles, to witness to a specific area. One student named Pal Sopheap, had been a policeman for about ten years. After he accepted Jesus as his Savior he became a disciple of Jesus. He spent much time in prayer and trusted in Jesus. He was excited to learn to go door to door to meet people and talk about God. He learned how to teach about the true God and he also gave Bible lessons.

**Tell us more of the results of this new church planting project.**

We sent Sopheap to Borei Keila, a district on the edge of Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh. He was very excited about his new job to introduce these people to God and begin a church. This district is mostly made up of poor people from the countryside who came to the city to look for work.

Many of them are destitute and have become criminals for a living. However, Sopheap is never afraid. He goes house to house with great courage. Since beginning this work in June, 2002, there are now over 50 people who believe in God and so many more are asking for Sopheap to come teach them.

### **What can ASAP readers do to help the church planting project in Borei Keila District of Phnom Penh?**

This group is growing very fast. For Sopheap to remain working, we need ASAP's help to sponsor him and we also need a place to worship. The group has outgrown the small house they have been worshipping in. The following is a breakdown of the needs:

1) \$200 per month will provide rent for a house that is big enough to hold over 100 people for Sabbath services and teaching purposes.

2) \$110 per month will provide a stipend (\$80) for Pal Sopheap and his family and house rent (\$30).


3) \$100 per month will provide 20 Khmer Bibles and Bible lessons for new

families/interests wanting to study and learn about God.

4) \$400 for special needs of a group of widows with children who are active members of the new church. They have been praying that God will provide a way for them to make a living for themselves and their children. A one-time loan of \$30 per woman will set her up to become a colporteur.

### **What would you like to say to ASAP readers?**

I am really happy to say thank you to you for helping my people to have salvation in Jesus Christ. Please pray for the new church planting project in Borei Keila District and also for Pal Sopheap. Please pray that God will bless this project to build a strong church for Him.

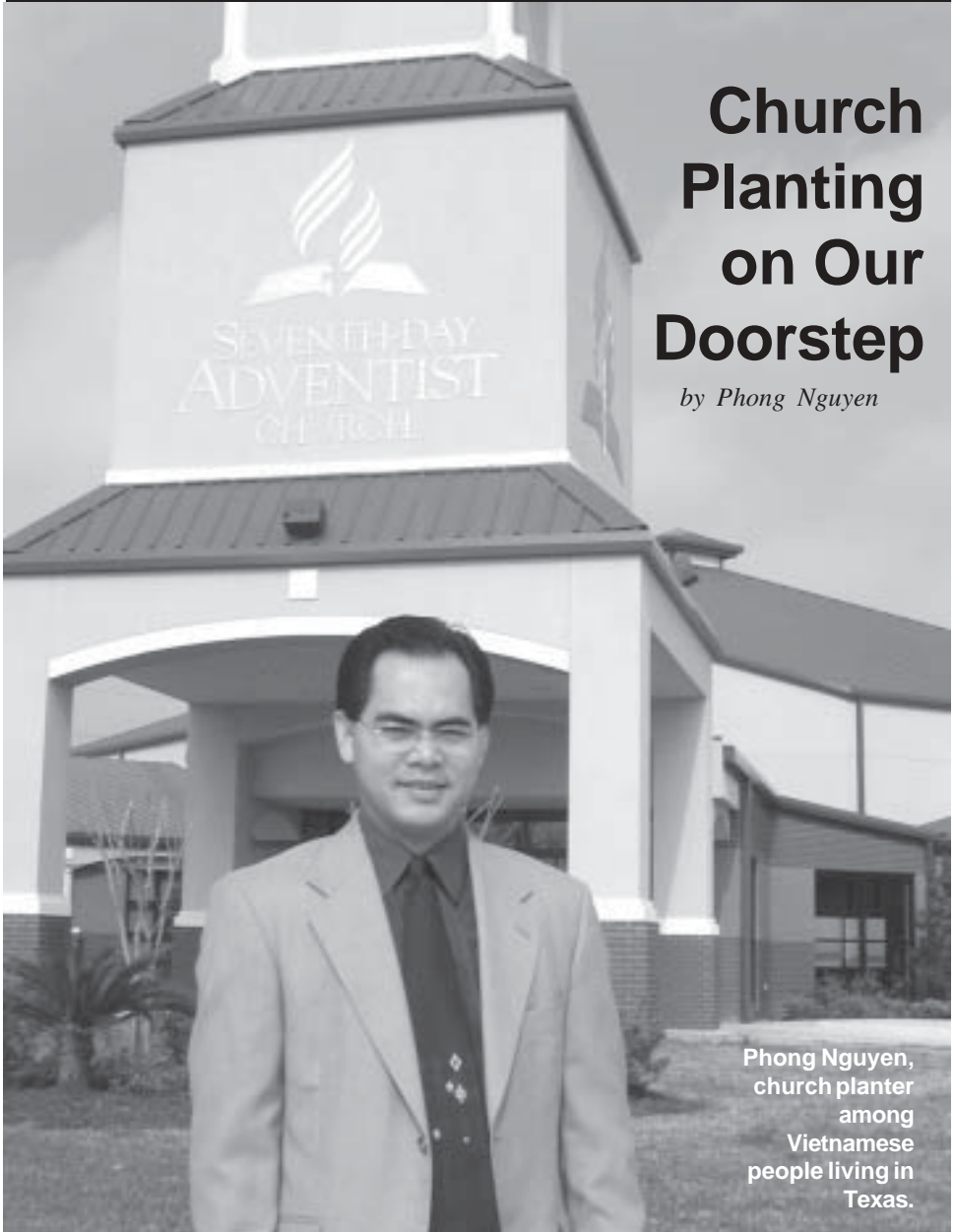
*Editors Note: Would you like to sponsor church planter Pal Sopheap and the church planting project in Borei Keila District? If you feel impressed to give to this need, please indicate so on the enclosed envelope. *



**Hang Dara (left) teaches a Bible class to new believers in Borei Keila District of Phnom Penh. Church planter Pal Sopheap sits on right.**

# Church Planting on Our Doorstep

*by Phong Nguyen*



Phong Nguyen,  
church planter  
among  
Vietnamese  
people living in  
Texas.

**M**ay praise be given to God! He is blessing the Vietnamese ministry in Houston. We have been growing in spirit and in number of attendance. I am contacting people

who listen to the SDA radio broadcast by visiting them and inviting them to our church. Many tell me they are interested. One man who is now coming to church was intro-

duced to me by a friend in California. I am also giving Bible studies to an elder of a local church who is in charge of a Vietnamese computer web site. He is eager to learn the Word of God and about the Sabbath and Adventism. He has been studying with me for about two months.

I have a Bible study for youth on Wednesday night and also a Bible study group that meets every Friday evening. I am teaching Bible prophecy using PowerPoint. We have service on Sabbath in a room at the Houston Central SDA Church. There are between 15 – 20 people who are regular in attendance

every Sabbath. Please pray for our continued church growth. 

**Editors Note:** Phong Nguyen writes from Houston Texas, where he is planting a church among the Vietnamese people. Adventist Southeast Asia Projects is working together with the Houston SDA Church and Texas Conference to support Phong Nguyen as a pastor. Five hundred dollars each month is needed to continue his support. Phong Nguyen became an Adventist while living in a refugee camp along the border of Thailand and Cambodia. When he resettled in South-

ern California he attended the Orange County SDA Church. Phong felt the call of God to prepare to be a minister. After he graduated with a degree in theology from La Sierra University he supported himself by working with computers. At the same time he worked as a volunteer pastor to a church group in Milpitas, California. He is now thrilled to devote his full-time attention to planting a church in Houston – an area where more than 5% are Asian.



**Phong Nguyen (right) stands with some of the Vietnamese church members in front of the Houston SDA Church.**

**Believers stand outside a new church planted in Im Rossey Orm Village, Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia. Adventist Mission is asking for our help to build bamboo and thatch churches in fifteen villages of Cambodia.**



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