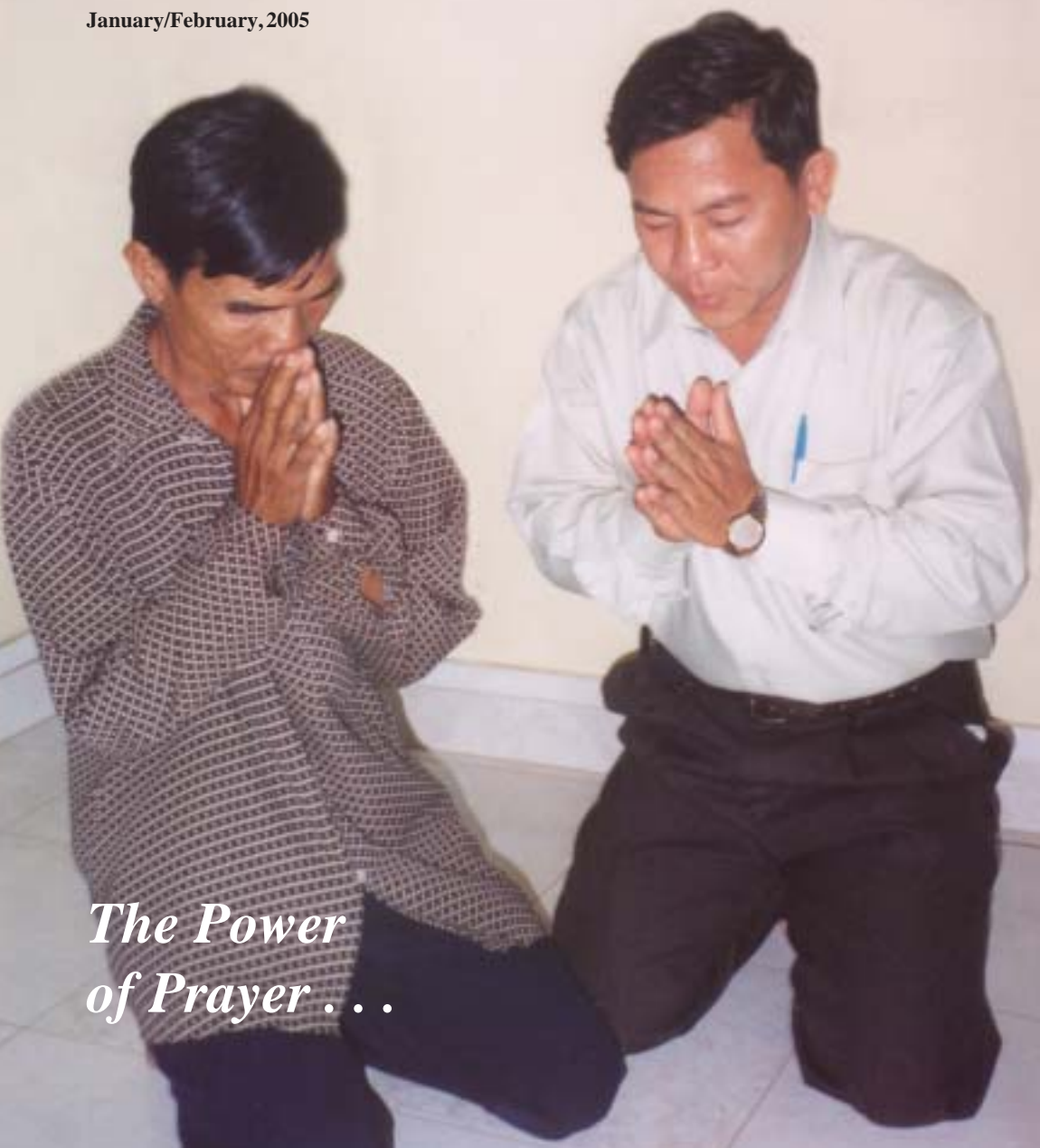


A stylized map of Southeast Asia in a light brown color is positioned in the top left corner of the page, partially overlapping the blue header.

ASAP

ADVENTIST SOUTHEAST ASIA PROJECTS

January/February, 2005



*The Power
of Prayer . . .*

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Cover photo: Pen Narith (right), district pastor of Kampong Thom Province kneels with Siey Sear, leader of the Kampot SDA Church. Prayer is an important part of the life of Cambodian pastors and church planters.



Editor.....Judy Aitken
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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. Web address: <http://www.ASAPministries.org>. We would love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Editor's Update ... by Judy Aitken



Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church (Acts 12:5 NKJV).

Peter's experience is a dramatic example of God's power unleashed as a result of prayer warriors. It is testimony to what can be accomplished by interceding on behalf of others. What also makes his miracle significant is that the believers morale was low at that time in early church history. The Christians suffered great persecution and the apostle James had just been murdered. Yet, despite their shaken faith, they gathered together in prayer to make continuous intercession for Peter. Their united prayers touched heaven. Their combined faith reached an intensity beyond that which any one of them possessed at that moment. The result? Herod's plans were foiled. An angel unlocked the prison gates and led the apostle to safety.

Do you recall those times you have wept on your knees in prayer, pleading with God for a miracle. I have had many such times; the most recent of which comes with a new law that has

taken place in Vietnam. This law, requiring all Adventists to turn themselves in to the authorities (by way of registering their underground house churches) puts over 300 thousand of your Christian brothers and sisters at risk of persecution, possible torture and death. The 200 Vietnamese pastors and Bible workers supported by ASAP are doubly at risk. These strong men and women of God have always worked with the knowledge that they could be martyrs for Christ (as two of their co-workers were last year). However, since November 15, when the new law went into effect, the risks have increased. To date, the authorities have closed five house churches and many others are under observation by the police. Several articles in this month's newsletter address the issue (pgs 7-9).


On behalf of thousands of Adventist believers in Vietnam, I appeal to you to hold each member close to your heart in prayer. While we are not together physically, we are

united in our passion for ministry and the spread of the gospel. As supporters of Adventist Southeast Asia Projects, we pray in unity, sending our petitions to heaven. As we pray in agreement, interceding for our Adventist family of God, our combined faith appeals to the same God who opened the prison gates for Peter.

Our prayers, placed at the foot of the throne of God, are the foundation of this ministry. It is prayer that blesses your donations, protecting each dollar given. It is prayer that ensures wise expenditures and protects the Bibles, the literature and the rice – seeing to it that it gets into the right hands. Prayer governs every aspect of ASAP – it permeates our board meetings and is heavily relied on in all areas of operation. Prayer is crucial to the

advancement of Christ’s coming, to the building of His kingdom.

Christ gives us a promise in Matt. 18:19-20: “Again I say unto you, that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Mighty as the prayer of one individual can be, it cannot be compared with the results possible when two or more persons pray in agreement. In unity there is strength.

There is a direct correlation between the success in missions and prayers on the home front. Thank you for sharing the burdens of this ministry for Christ. Thank you for your prayers. 



Judy Aitken (center) and Mary Ann McNeilus pray with Adventist believers in Takamao Church, Cambodia.

Still Packing for Cambodia and Needing MORE

The Juniors at ASI again this year filled footlockers with Sabbath School supplies for Cambodia. The SS materials will be put to good use because so many new worship groups have formed during this past year. Since the footlockers will not fill a whole container we are in need of more of the items listed below:

Summer clothing for—babies, children, men and women

(remember, small sizes for small people)

School supplies

Tents for Pathfinders

Sabbath School supplies (non-English items)

Easy reading English Bibles

Supplies and toys for two orphanages

Please send boxes to the address in the box below with the contents written on the outside of the box. Thank You!

General Conference Transportation
c/o Cambodia Adventist Mission, 6620 Amberton Drive
Elkridge, MD 21075



In Loving *Memory*



We would like to thank Doyle and Lorelei Saxby for their gift made in memory of **Gayle Saxby** (1964-1995).

We also send our appreciation to Betty Buckley, Rowena Rick and Beloa McNaughton for their gift in memory of their dear friend, **Betty Fleming**.

Dorothy Palmer remembers **La Verne Schlenker** with her donation. Thank you.

To each of these friends, we send our deepest sympathy and condolences. We join you in looking forward to a reunion in heaven and hearing Christ's words, "Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).



Praise and Prayer

Praise the Lord for these advances made for His Kingdom!

- The gospel is exploding in Vietnam among the SDA underground house church movement. It is estimated that more than 400,000 are Sabbath keepers.
- Thank the Lord that radio signals from AWR have improved so many more people are able to hear the SDA Peace and Happiness Radio Broadcast.
- The Lord has poured out His blessings on the efforts of national pastors, church planters and pioneer workers in Cambodia. Since Oct.1, 2003 until today there have been 1,149 believers baptized into God's family. We anticipate many more after the evangelistic meeting the end of December.
- ASAP staff members praise the Lord for another great year in 2004, filled with the Lord's blessings. We thank God for each of you whose sacrificial gifts make the spread of the gospel possible in Southeast Asia. We are continually seeing how God is blessing as thousands of precious people are coming to know Him and prepare for His soon coming.
- Praise the Lord for reports of many pastors in northern and eastern Thailand who have accepted the Sabbath and other Bible truths and are now pastoring Adventist church groups. We thank God for 51 new believers baptized this year through the wit-

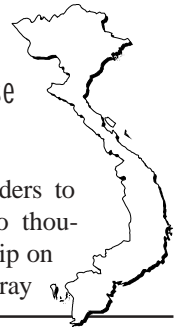
ness of the nine lay pastors supported by ASAP.

Your prayers are needed for **Cambodia**. Please **Pray . . .**

- For religious freedom to be continued by the Cambodian government.
- For success of the evangelistic meetings (Dec. 23 - Jan. 1) being put on in Phnom Penh by the McNeilus family and a team of pastors and workers. Pray that many will accept Christ and join God's family.
- For the blessing of the Holy Spirit on mission officers, district pastors, church planters, lay Bible workers and pioneers. Pray for their courage and protection as they preach, teach, travel and work amidst trials and dangers.
- ASAP has committed to financially support Cambodian church members and leaders to be registered with their local government will be made void and that all who worship in house churches will have courage to continue their witness and worship.

Your prayers are needed for **Vietnam**. Please **Pray . . .**

- For the government leaders to grant religious freedom to thousands of people who worship on Sabbath in house churches. Pray



that the new law that recently went into affect requiring all house church members and leaders to be registered with their local government will be made void and that all who worship in house churches will have courage to continue their witness and worship.

- For Pastor Isah Young and his wife, Mai, as they work with the assistants, team of workers and church members who produce the Peace & Happiness Radio Broadcast.

- That pastors and believers throughout the country may withstand unrelenting government pressures to compromise and conform to strict regulations. For courage and protection of pastors and believers who are suffering persecution for their faith in God.

- For more than 300,000 people who are listening to the SDA radio broadcast in the hill tribe regions of the country, many of whom are being oppressed and persecuted by the government.

- Funding needed to keep up with the many needs of the growing work. Pray for the need of support for 200 district pastors, training expenses for new pastors, transportation, Bibles, religious books, other evangelism needs, house church repairs and food for hungry people.

- For about two hundred SDA families who are flood victims, many of whom have lost their homes.

Your prayers are needed for Thailand and Laos. Please Pray . . .

- For political leaders and for the continued lifting of the restrictions on religious freedom.

- For revival and unity among church leaders and our small group of members in Laos.



- For the leaders and pastors of the Thailand Adventist Mission.

- For Mission College evangelism programs led by Khamsay Phetchareun.

- For the need of support for ten Thai pastors, six Laotian pastors and ten lay Bible workers.

- For support to help the Thailand Adventist Mission build a church and also for evangelism materials in Thailand and Laos.

Your prayers are needed for ASAP sponsored church planting in North America. Please Pray . . .


- For Vietnamese church planting in Seattle, Washington that is led by Son Xuan Nguyen and in Orlando, Florida where Minh Pham is working as a Bible worker.

- For Laotian and Hmong church planting in Sacramento led by Ko Saelee, as well as for the work in San Diego led by Thongsouay Sakdarak.

- For the spread of the gospel among groups of Thai, Khmer, Lao, Hmong and Vietnamese people who have immigrated to the United States.

Your prayers are needed for Adventist Southeast Asia Projects. Please Pray . . .

- For guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit as we partner with missions in Southeast Asia. Pray that we will follow God's will in every matter of support and outreach.

- For Mary Ann McNeilus, Seyla Khat, Diana David and Judy Aitken as we visit Southeast Asia during the later part of December to Jan. 24. Pray that the health/evangelism seminars we present will be a blessing to pastors and others who attend. 

The Choice

by Isah Young

Director of the SDA Radio Ministry to Vietnam

Prayer – the word is so familiar that many Christians take it for granted, especially in the US where everything is readily available and within our reach. When life is so comfortable, it is easy to overlook the need for prayer. However, when we are in emergency situations or a crisis enters our lives, we quickly remember prayer like the spare tire we keep on hand in our vehicles for emergencies.

When we study the Bible, we see that God's power is most manifested when His people pray. The lives of Moses, Elijah, Samuel, Daniel, etc. show they were people of prayer. The early church was a church of prayer. When we have nowhere to turn for help but the Lord, the Lord's power is the strongest at that moment. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

In our organized church today committees or organizations meet to respond to the needs presented by our congregations. This is a great blessing; however, it is easy to look to man and the abundant resources available to us rather than to fall on our knees in prayer - in total reliance on God.

Perhaps this has something to do with the fervent prayers of the Vietnamese believers. With no support network available

Isah Young prays with a district pastor of house churches. The explosion of the gospel in Vietnam is evidence of the power of the Lord at work through prayers.

other than pastors (many of whom are sponsored by ASAP), the believers are wholly dependant upon God to meet their needs. The members, as well as the district leaders and pastors, live daily with the possibility that at any moment they could be arrested by the authorities for worshiping on the Sabbath (and to get arrested means to endure persecution at the hands of local authorities). There is no committee, no organization, no person they can turn to – their only option is to look up to Christ. It is this total reliance on Christ's strength and protection that has made the house church movement so strong in Vietnam.

The survival and growth of the house



church movement in Vietnam is a great miracle. It is evidence and the strongest proof of the power of the Lord at work through the prayers of His people. When the Lord used me to start the house church movement in Vietnam, we did not have financial resources nor did we get professional advice. We have been totally dependent on donations from our brothers and sisters around the world. I thought to myself, "Maybe we can survive for two or three years, at most." We are now in the sixth year, and the SDA radio ministry continues to grow with God's family of believers growing faster than we could have ever imagined! Repeatedly, when we have an urgent need (for Bibles, literature, pastors and teachers) it seems overwhelming and our first thought is, "there's no way we can help." But we pray. Then the Lord impresses someone like you to send a donation, and the donations add up, so we are able to provide the Bibles, to send the pastors and to distribute the literature. We firmly believe that the prayers from our hearts and the hearts of those in need are heard by God, who then impresses you to send support. Many times help has come at just the right time that it is needed it can't be anything other than divine intervention.

On November 15, 2004, the government in Vietnam issued a new law. The law requires all house churches in Vietnam to register with their local police department. If any house church failed to do this they would face severe persecution. This has posed a great problem for Seventh-day Adventist believers who worship across the country of Vietnam in thousands of house churches. To register with the government means you turn yourself in to be put in prison, persecuted and you would most likely face a slow death. However, if you do not register with the government it means you are illegal and, if caught, could face worse persecution and would more likely face death. Either way you will possibly die. On the one hand, you die a slow death without being useful to the Lord. On the other hand you probably will die if/when caught, but you still have the opportunity to work for the Lord and save souls. Your SDA brothers and sisters in Christ have chosen the second way, to die on the battle field engaged in combat for the Lord rather than dying uselessly.

Church members are already experiencing crackdown by authorities. Bibles, hymnals, worship materials and other worship equipment (curtains, chairs, guitars...) have been confiscated by authorities and used as




Pastor Minh Pham bows in fervent prayer with other Adventist pastors.

evidence against the leaders of these groups. But members move to other houses and divide into smaller groups to continue to worship on Sabbath with the radio program.


The wonderful thing is that whenever the authorities arrest a leader, the members pray harder, and the Lord raises up several more leaders, not only to take the place of the arrested leader but also to expand to other areas. The leaders have often been released from prison to find their churches thriving with other leaders who have stepped into the role in answer to their prayers. When man closes one door, God opens several others. The members become stronger and the timid at heart grow strong. To be persecuted for Jesus' sake is a joy and an honor. The Vietnamese pastors who you support are willing to die.

My prayer and gratitude is continually sent to heaven for you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, who have been impressed by the Lord to be a part of this ministry.

Other than reports in this newsletter, you do not have the opportunity to see the results of your gifts by fancy graphs and charts. For the safety of the members, we cannot show you pictures of the house churches or even pictures of the members' faces. Yet you give without the need to be impressed, and without the need for personal recognition. Your name is not on the cover of magazines nor are your gifts announced to your friends and family. Truly, you give with your right hand without letting your left hand know about it. For this, I thank the Lord. Your dedication to storing treasure in heaven is the foundation of the SDA radio ministry in Vietnam. Because of people like yourself, the gospel is spreading to the far corners of the earth.

May the Lord, who knows everything, record your deeds and reward you in the day of His return. For now, until I have opportunity to do so in person, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you do to help take Jesus to the Vietnamese people. 

FLOOD DISASTER

When natural disaster strikes in Vietnam, unlike the USA, those affected cannot turn to their local government for help. With no social service system in place, the burden falls on the local temples. The monks or religious officials assume the responsibility of helping those in need. So what do our thousands of underground SDA believers do when a flood wipes out their rice crops? This has happened in three provinces, leaving more than 200 members in desperate need. Floods have ruined homes, destroyed crops, damaged small businesses of members and forced many members to flee to higher ground. As Adventists, they are uncomfortable going temples. They have turned to us for help. The Vietnamese pastors (98% of whom are supported by ASAP) are eager to do all they can to be of assistance. They are praying with the members that we will be able to respond to this most recent crisis. Some of the members need funds to repair their homes. Others need basic food to keep their families from starving. Some need rice seed that will help them in replanting their fields. The pastors have compiled a list of each member's needs. We estimate that \$10,000 will provide each of the 200 families with approximately \$50 which will go a long way in rebuilding their lives. Would you like to make a big difference in the life of an Adventist Vietnamese family? If so, please write "flood victims" on the enclosed envelope with your gift of support. Truly, we are one family of God. Truly, we can make a difference. 

No Longer Alone

by Minh Pham*

Hello Pastor Minh. At 65 years old you became a Seventh-day Adventist. Tell us how that happened.

I was a Christian pastor for ten years before I began listening to the SDA radio program. I was surprised to hear good news that I had never heard before. After listening for three days, I began to study my Bible to learn if the words that Pastor Isah Young preached were true. I thought to myself, “If I follow the Bible truth of the Sabbath, who will be my friend? Who will worship with me?”

Did you know any other Adventists? How did you make the first step?

I did not know any other Adventist people. I told my wife that we had to go out of the denomination we were in. I told her that I felt that I could not continue to preach and worship in my old church as they did not follow the truth about the Sabbath. At first my wife thought that I had made the wrong decision. I continued to study the Bible with her, seeking for truth.

When did you meet an Adventist?

I sent a letter to the Peace and Happiness director, asking if I, alone, worshipped on Sabbath. I thought, “How can I stand alone?”

Even my family members, all of them, seemed to be against me. I felt very lonely. I knelt down and prayed to God, “In the community of faith where and who should I worship with?” I had no literature at that time. I only listened to the radio messages and wrote down the sermons and Bible references.

Did you continue to preach to your church congregation?

Yes. I continued to be employed by the church denomination but I continued to preach the truth of the Sabbath. My members told me that everyone worships on Sunday and that the Sabbath keepers are a cult. I felt that I was a failure in trying to convince people of my new belief. However, my wife believed with me! As we united in prayer the Holy Spirit opened our mind to clearly see the Bible teaching. We decided that we had to follow the Bible truth even if we worshipped alone and I lost my job. When we read the Bible, God gave us comfort.

What happened next?

I left my job and I continued to pray and wait patiently for God to work. I believed that God has power to do difficult and wonderful things. My wife and I prayed and prayed. About three months passed. Then Pastor Isah

Young sent a pastor to visit me. When I met the pastor he gave me literature and books from Peace and Happiness. He also introduced me to others in my district that worshipped on the true Sabbath. My wife and I were so happy to worship with others who believed the same. For six months I prayed and studied the books, "Truth of the Sabbath" and "Handbook of Faith". I gave the books to my son, son-in-law and daughters who were opposing me. They were leaders in their Christian denominations.

Did you miss being a pastor?

Yes, but I began to teach and preach to all who would listen so I never felt like I left the pastorate. I only changed how I believe. Then, in 2000 I was invited to a pastor training session by Pastor Isah Young. At that time I asked Pastor Young to pray for my son and his family and my other children who were leaders in another Christian denomination. I especially asked to have prayer for my son who was one of the leaders of a large denomination. He had not spoken to me for more than a year after I made the decision to follow the Sabbath and leave the Sunday church. After Pastor Young baptized my wife and me into the remnant church, we all knelt together to have a special prayer for the rest of my family to join me in baptism some day. We prayed in unity for my son and my family.

I can see your son's salvation was a big burden on your heart. What happened?

When I returned home from the training session my son was waiting for me. He told me that he had been studying the books I had

given him. The Holy Spirit had convicted him of the truth. This was a big answer to our prayers and the prayers of all the pastors at the training session.

The life of an Adventist pastor in Vietnam is full of risk and very difficult physically. With the many house churches scattered across the districts, how do you manage?


The Lord has blessed me with good health so that I can travel by motorcycle to the towns and villages where people worship. I seldom get tired because God gives me strength. The Lord knows our needs. I now work with my son. We often travel all day by motorcycle, then walk many kilometers. Sometimes we climb mountains to preach to those who have sent word that they desire to know God. On every trip we go the Lord blesses us with words to help many people believe in God.

It sounds like you have many people to worship with now.

When I began working for God as an Adventist pastor, about 15 people from my Sunday church immediately joined me in weekly Sabbath worship. Today, three years later, I minister to 1,456 believers who worship in house churches. My son, son-in-law, daughters and grandson are serving the Lord with me.

Praise God!

I thank the Almighty God for answering my prayers and the prayers of God's people.

*Name has been changed 

Wiping Away the Clouds

by Pastor Hang Dara


I am very happy to share how prayer affects God's work in my district of Cambodia. Prayer, guided by the Holy Spirit, is my power in planting churches. That is my work. I am a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and for over 20 years, I have been a Seventh-day Adventist. However, most of my energy is to be a pastor – to plant churches in Cambodia. Daily, I realize that without God's presence walking with me I could not face the challenges, struggles, troubles and problems that come with my job. I trust Him completely. I have grown, over the years, in this trust. I have learned that the word **trust** is the most important principle in the Bible. It has helped me stay connected to the true God. He is my personal God that always helps and answers when I call to Him for help. I have committed and dedicated my life to serve God through the power of prayer.

It is through prayer that we now have 20 house churches in my district. When I was just out of college, I knew I would be called to plant churches in Cambodia. I knelt down on the roof of one of the school buildings and I prayed. I dedicated my life to serve Him with a reliance on prayer. Daily, I realize that I have to live by the power of prayer as food for my life – to help me survive. I have many experiences that prove this to be true.

Several months ago we had a youth camp

in Phnom Penh city. About 50 kids from my district took part. When we were setting up the ten tents at 6 p.m., the clouds were very dark and it was going to rain soon. I stood up and asked the young people to pray with me in asking God to wipe away the rain clouds for a few hours while we set up. It was the rainy season and I could see some kids did not believe this could happen. But it did. It did not rain for 24 hours.

It was amazing for us to see His miracle. All the youth praised the Lord for His love, care and kindness to us at this occasion. This youth group makes up a strong Pathfinder club. Most of them come from Buddhist backgrounds having converted after joining our youth group in the church. They are very strong for God. No one can sway their beliefs or convince them to turn away from God and go back to their old beliefs. They have become acquainted with the true God, to love Him and to have a friendship with Him through prayer.

I do not know my Seventh-day Adventist family of God who lives in the United States. But someday I will know you when we live in one land, heaven. Until that time, we can begin to build our friendship by praying for each other. Please pray for me. Please pray for the youth in Cambodia. Please pray for God to continue to bless me in my work to plant churches for Him. 

Walking with Me, Walking with Jesus

by Pastor Hang Dara

Bopal is a volunteer, inspired by the Holy Spirit to spread good news to non-believers. For a long time, he was only a church member like many others. Then one day, he came to ask me if he could accompany me when I went to teach and pray for new members. I was very happy to have company - I felt that this was an answer to my prayer, that this man was sent by God to help me. After he walked and traveled with me, working for God, I realized that this man has a gift of encouraging and convincing people to believe in Jesus.

Many months passed by where Bopal and I worked side by side. When people from the suburb city asked for a teacher, I knew that Bopal was the one to go. He willingly went to plant a church there, where he now teaches 32 students about God. Mrs Tol Sokhorn is one of his students. Bopal taught her to tell other people about Jesus. He taught his students according to the Bible lessons we have for new believers that includes doctrines of the church such as the Sabbath, sin, salvation, the second coming, Christian living standards, etc. Before he begins his classes, Bopal always asks God to empower him with the Holy Spirit to guide him in teaching and praying. He has done his ministry there successfully according to my ob-

servation. He is a kind, courteous, humble person with a big smile and love for God..

I thank God to send Thor Bopal to help in ministry for God. What are the results of his work? In Sre Nhor there were 16 new souls baptized in August this year. He began a worship group in Sre Nhor and he teaches the Bible and supports three more small groups in his area. He is happy to see the Lord's blessings and he can see how Christ has empowered his life since walking with God. Recently, he told me that he wishes to work as God's servant his whole life in Cambodia.

One day a lady who just believed in Jesus contacted Bopal. She needed help to get out the devil that possessed her. She is from Sre Nhor. (The village where she is located, Sre Nhor, is located about 17 kilometers from Phnom Penh. Bopal goes there almost every day to teach Bible.) On this day, Bopal came to me and counseled with me about what he was to do and how to overcome the Satan power. I told Bopal that there is only one way to pray – it is in the name of Jesus. Only then can he chase that devil power. He must also read and follow what Jesus did in the four gospels. I recommended that he call the church members with a strong faith in God to pray hard, from all their heart that Jesus will give

power to chase Satan. Then we prayed together, in the name of Jesus, to start working immediately in setting this woman free from Satan.

Bopal prayed most of the night. Early the next morning, he left for the village to confront the devil. When he arrived at the house, he discovered that, through the night, the lady felt better. Everyone told him that it seems there was a special power to get rid of the trouble in her body. Then Bopal invited the church members to pray by asking God's power to chase Satan completely away. After the team prayed so hard, the woman felt peace. She can now talk to us as a normal person. The devil has left and never returned.

This is an amazing example of God's power to chase the devil away through prayer and when the Holy Spirit is present in people like Bopal it is a wonderful witness.

Now Bopal continues to work for God, walking with Jesus. **ASAP**

Author, Pastor Hang Dara has been working in ministry for over twelve years.



Volunteer Bible Worker, Thor Bopal (right), stands with new believers in Christ in Sre Nhor Village

A terrible flood has struck central Vietnam. More than 200 house church members' homes have been damaged or destroyed by the flood. Many are homeless and without rice to feed their families. Pastors and members are praying for help (see page 10).



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