

## The Khmer of Cambodia

### The People Group

Cambodia is the second poorest South East Asian country, with 80% of the 15 million Khmer people living in rural regions, primarily as subsistence farmers. Nearly three decades of war and genocide have left the nation broken and economically stagnant, with the resulting population being predominantly under 30 years of age. However, this emerging youthful generation is beginning to engage with the modern world and as a result is finding a voice as it seeks to construct a better future.

Today the Khmer people hold to a culturally Buddhist worldview but within that remains many animistic beliefs that influence their daily life. Less than 1% of the population profess to follow Jesus and those that do live with a constant tension of maintaining traditional responsibilities to their parents along with being influenced by a rising Western influence.

### Global Interaction team among the Khmer

Living in the North West region of Cambodia, the team engages with communities struggling with poor health, low literacy rates and high unemployment. Currently the team is working to build on relationships it has formed through sports ministry and from travelling to remote villages to learn from local Khmer people. As the team grows there will be increasing opportunities to share life and faith with the Khmer. This year the team plans to spend more time in the rural areas, sharing the message of Jesus with those who would otherwise not have the chance to hear it.

### Prayer Needs

- God's Spirit to be prompting Khmer people to seek an understanding of Jesus and God's plan for humanity
- The team's visits to rural villages will deepen connections and open opportunities to share faith
- Bible studies with Khmer tennis coaches would spark deep spiritual conversations
- Strong partnership teams to form to support the candidates preparing to serve with the team

### Pray for the Team Members

Catherine

Craig and Kim (candidates)

Luke and Rachel (candidates)

Marc and Rachel (candidates)

Paul and Lydia (candidates)

Rob and Deb

Scott and Janelle

Tristan and Megan (candidates)

## Stories of Hope from Cambodia

### **Changing the Rules**

Through the tennis program, the team works closely with Khmer coaches and players. As the players train hard, persevere and encourage each other, the team is witnessing a transformation. From underprivileged youth lacking confidence, the team is now seeing young people who are starting to thrive as they realise their potential. Beyond just developing tennis and life skills, the team also has many opportunities to share the Gospel with the young Khmer players.

Life changing transformations are also slowly taking place with the coaches. The weekly coaches meeting begins with a Bible study. Recently they looked at the story in Mark 2 of the paralysed man who was lowered through the roof to meet Jesus. The Buddhist background coaches have the understanding that blessings only come through good works and attaining merit. Reading the story of the paralysed man prompted an insightful discussion from the coaches about how Jesus came to 'change the rules.'

Thank God that He is opening the Khmer coaches' eyes to the unexpected truth of His Word and pray that they would remain curious to find out more.

### **Faith Grows in the Midst of Challenges**

Scott and Janelle regularly visit their Khmer friends Mr D and Mrs S who live in a nearby rural area. Both Mr D and Mrs S have professed faith in Jesus. Scott and Janelle continue to journey with them as Mr D and Mrs S seek to learn more about God and grow in their faith. Scott and Janelle pray with them, encouraging Mr D and Mrs S to trust in God and look to Him for their hope. As they go about their day, Mr D and Mrs S both enjoy listening to the Bible and worship songs.

Mrs S has recurrent episodes of illness with her mental and physical health fluctuating. When unwell, Mrs S is unable to get out of bed. On these days, she chooses to use her time reading the Bible and singing songs of praise.

Thank God that Mr D and Mrs S have chosen to follow Jesus and pray that their faith will continue to grow. Pray also for complete healing for Mrs S and boldness as they share their newfound faith with their family and community.

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