

The Khmer of Cambodia

The People Group

Of the 15 million Khmer people in Cambodia, 80% live 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.

The Global Interaction team among the Khmer

Our team is actively involved in many aspects of community life through volunteering at the local hospital, school and other areas. Through this, the team is developing meaningful friendships with local people, staff and teachers. Over time the team hopes to discern God's leading into new relationships in new communities.

Many team members have joined the team in the past two years and are devoting much of their time to culture and language lessons with local language nurturers. Their growing language skills and cultural understanding are essential as they build relationships with Khmer people, become increasingly involved in community life and seek to share Jesus.

Prayer Needs

- That God will continue to move among the Khmer, drawing people to Himself and opening hearts to receive Jesus as the only way
- For the cross-cultural team to be continually growing in their culture and language learning and remain motivated despite the challenges
- For cross-cultural workers to have opportunities to share God's stories with their Khmer friends
- That Khmer seekers will see examples of others following Jesus and remaining within their culture and community
- For the cross-cultural team to discern avenues of community involvement that will bear long-term fruit

Pray for the Team Members

Andy and Cathie (candidates)
Catherine
Craig and Kim
Luke (Team Leader) and Rachel
Rob and Deb
Scott and Janelle (concluding)
Tristan and Megan

Stories of Hope from Cambodia

In Every Season

Preparing vegetables for market is often a social activity for Khmer women. They sit together, preparing the produce they have grown and share their joys and sorrows. It was in this space that Deb first met Mrs M. Initially she was very reserved towards Deb and reluctant to interact with her, however over time Mrs M slowly warmed to Deb.

In a country where the birth rate is very healthy, and becoming pregnant soon after marriage is expected, women who cannot conceive experience significant cultural shame. When Deb met Mrs M, she had been married for three years without becoming pregnant and the pain had led her to withdraw from society and not participate in important cultural events.

Over many months, Deb invested in her relationship with Mrs M, sharing Bible stories, listening to Mrs M and letting her know she was praying for her. Deb witnessed a transformation in Mrs M. She began to blossom, smiling inside and out. Flash forward to May this year, and Mrs M has welcomed a baby into her family.

Deb prays that as she, Rob and the whole team sit alongside their Khmer friends in every season of life, God's love will be revealed.

Transformation

Mr Li is a young Khmer man who Scott met more than a year and a half ago. When Scott met him, Mr Li was in a very challenging situation. He had become paralysed due to Tuberculosis of the spine, however, he had been misdiagnosed and never received the treatment or support he needed. Believing Mr Li to be lazy, his family had placed him at the front of their home in order to shame him into getting up and working. Heartbreakingly, there is a lot of misunderstanding around disability in Cambodia and people with disabilities are often not treated with dignity or able to access adequate care.

Since meeting Mr Li, Scott has worked with him on his rehabilitation and slowly they have seen progress. From being bedridden, to using a walker, to now walking with a four-point stick... Mr Li, Scott and the rehabilitation team have much to celebrate. However, this is only the beginning of Mr Li's transformation.

Over the past 18 months, Scott and Mr Li have had many conversations about Jesus and regularly read the Bible together. Scott has witnessed Mr Li's inner transformation from depression to joy, and from hopelessness to faith. Thank God for Mr Li's continued healing both physically and spiritually, and the renewed hope and passion he has for life. Please pray for his family to see Jesus as the Saviour for all people, including the Khmer.

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