

Ike Smith – Cambodia June 2005

On Saturday 25th June 2005, I returned to Bangkok, Thailand, to meet up with Tony and continue our work in the prisons and the Klong Toey slum area. The main reason for the trip was to visit the neighbouring country of Cambodia, a much poorer, harsher place and the people who had suffered under the notorious Pol Pot during one of the worst genocidal atrocities in the world in living memory.

On the day after my arrival in Thailand, Tony and I met with our friend, Andy the tailor, to accompany him that day in his missionary work in one of Bangkok's many prisons. At the 'House of Blessings', the Christian Prison Ministry's head offices, we joined another brother leading the prison outreach programme and made our way to our destination. There we spoke inside the prison grounds to the 120 assembled men, 50 of whom were believers, preaching the gospel and sharing our testimonies. Afterwards several hands went up from those wishing to give their lives to the Lord and to be baptised. Their choir, comprising of men with mostly 15-20 year sentences or more, sang worship songs to us with a sincerity and passion which was truly humbling and very moving. The least we could do was give all 120 a decent meal that day and provide basic toiletry packs. After the usual daily diet of poor grade brown rice which chips teeth, described as being in what looks like after dinner washing bowl slops, we repeatedly heard how the prisoners view the meal we paid for, that you paid for, as 'heaven came down to earth'. Thank you. Tony arranged a further supply of many much-needed Bibles. But what we would hear on our return from Cambodia appeared to be truly miraculous.

The following day, armed with Cambodian Bibles and details of contacts from a chance meeting with a Philippino missionary at Andy's shop, we made our way to Phnom Penh.

Prior to this trip a trusted lady in our church in Wiltshire, gifted in the area of prophetic visions and dreams, had a repeated and very detailed and graphic vision regarding the work Tony and I were to do. This latest adventure had taken on a mysterious but exciting twist.

We were to look for somebody who had small children in her care. The lady was calling out to God in desperate need for help to feed the hungry children, and for a bible. There were many signs in the vision to lead us to her including reference to an arm ailment. A large part of the vision showed our spiritual enemy who was waiting for us and doing everything to prevent us from seeking and finding the lady. Many distractions and obstacles would come mainly through some sort of guide, a MAN.

NAM, our driver for the trip, met us at the airport and was to stay with us throughout our time in Cambodia. Unbeknown to us we had already met the first person in the vision. On the advice of Nam we decided to travel the next day to the north of the country, to Siem Reap and the Buddhist temple monuments at Angkor Wat. This would take us through the countryside to look for our 'lady' and give another opportunity to climb to the high places and to confess the Name above all names, our Lord Jesus Christ.... and pray. At Siem Reap we were looking for the churches Christian believers. Nam, naturally had his own agenda which included three children

to feed, and other places to take us as guides do. It was becoming increasingly difficult, as per the vision. But we eventually found the church in Siem Reap.

All the signs and details of Lesley's vision had pointed to this place. Included was that Tony was Holy Spirit led and I should follow him. Tony felt this was the place we were looking for, we met with the pastor and inside this church building Nam tried to interpret for us. We learned how they received the very poor from the surrounding villages and countryside who were looking for food and help and how they would put them up along with their children. Inside the church with us along with Nam and the pastor was a young man, and a woman. The woman had a large painful swelling on her arm which had been getting worse. It was hard to understand her but it appeared that she thought she had some sort of insect living and moving within her arm. Aghast at this, Tony and I insisted on taking her to a Christian hospital where her worst fears were confirmed. We paid for her treatment. Inside the church however that day, and regarding Lesley's lady, I was still not convinced this was the right place. It was not what I expected. We gave Bibles and some money to the pastor and left.

Then another amazing thing happened when out of the blue I was sent a text from another lady in my home church. She knew nothing at all of the vision and had heard only that I was in Cambodia seeking Lesley's lady. The Lord had impressed upon her that we were close to the lady, that it was not what I expected and we were not to pass IT by! He repeatedly told her to send the message there and then. It came through shortly after we had left the church. We returned that next day, met a lady where women were preparing food and who we felt was the pastor's wife, and gave her a lot more money. She was transformed from the look of one heavily burdened to being literally lit up. The only English words she could speak were "bless you"..., we think.

Another lady in my church, a true intercessor had suggested to Lesley while we were away that the lady in vision might be 'the Church'. Back in England after the trip my pastor pointed me to one of the apostle John's letters in the Bible where John (not Tony John!) writes to the 'Dear Lady and her children...' meaning the Church and its members.

We went to Cambodia hoping to help, maybe even rescue little children from the vile sex slave trade. There was absolutely no leading in that area whatsoever. However we found Christians who were helping and feeding the very poorest people, the ones who otherwise might be amongst those who do the unthinkable desperate when they sell their own children into that trade. We gave money and believe we may have helped in the prevention of another ongoing atrocity?

It is truly amazing and mysterious that our Wonderful God would give specific details in a vision (description of a man and his actions and aims, description of a woman another plight, mention of a bad arm, a dragon, thousands of birds, a smiling, mocking gesture against the Holy, distractions, obstacles, small shed like wooden huts in a remote place off the track and so on...) to a lady in England added to and confirmed separately and independently two other ladies, and then send and use two very human and ordinary men, street men (a copper and a crook!). We

supplied Bibles and money from the supporters, encouraging and supporting a small church in hard place, possibly helping to keep vulnerable children with their families. We believe we found the place where we were sent and it has since been impressed upon us that this could be the beginning of a move that our God has planned for Cambodia.

The finale of our trip to that land was a brief return to Phnom Penh where we gave to another fellowship and then a quick visit to the killing fields and museum. There our guide, who had featured in a recent BBC TV documentary, was given a Bible and we were then introduced to his boss at the site, a Christian Cambodian who also taught at a Christian centre in Phnom Penh.

A further few days in Bangkok saw our return to the slum area and a meeting with another missionary group to the poor and the communicant of a project involving the girls rescued from the streets of Klony Toy and my church back home. And then a meeting with a Director of the Thailand Christian Prison Ministry. This time we paid for the feeding of 500 Christian ladies in the woman's prison, a slightly more nutritious meal than normal only to be had at Christmas and again described as heaven on earth, then we heard from the Director, Sunthorn, the amazing news that the day after we had visited and spoken to the guys at the men's prison, 21 of the men we had ministered to were suddenly realised. Some sort of amnesty, an early release and apparently unheard of! (By the way these gents sleep lying on the floor in rooms containing up to 50 men - for over 20 years) This fulfilled a previous dream of our friend Lesley where she saw us in an Ark going from country to country surrounded by crowds of faces. To us Ark meant rescue, and here was another example!

So whatever else was happening, and there was a lot of good stuff, we clearly saw the leading of the Holy Spirit and the Hand of God at work. Praise our God!

And a final word about the others. I had become increasingly agitated and then down right angry with the many dodgy characters appearing on the Bangkok pavement to try and entice us in to the shady girly bars. And then I looked closely into the face and eyes of the last one who moved on me, whilst I was trying to buy water. Alex. I saw the person, freely gave to him and moved on. The beggar lady in the main street, late at night with the small child in her arms who remembered me from the last time I had given to her on a previous trip. The three guides in Phnom Penh talking of the unbelievable tragedy and suffering of an entire nation and people under the Khmer Rouge and the painful loss of their teenage brothers and sisters. And then the English lady with her three kids stranded at Bangkok airport and frantically asking for money to pay the airport tax so she could leave. She found us.

And my own visionary dream on my return to the UK. The picture of the half dressed little Asian girl staring at us as we were leaving. A look of longing, of pleading. But not a word spoken.

There are many, many others