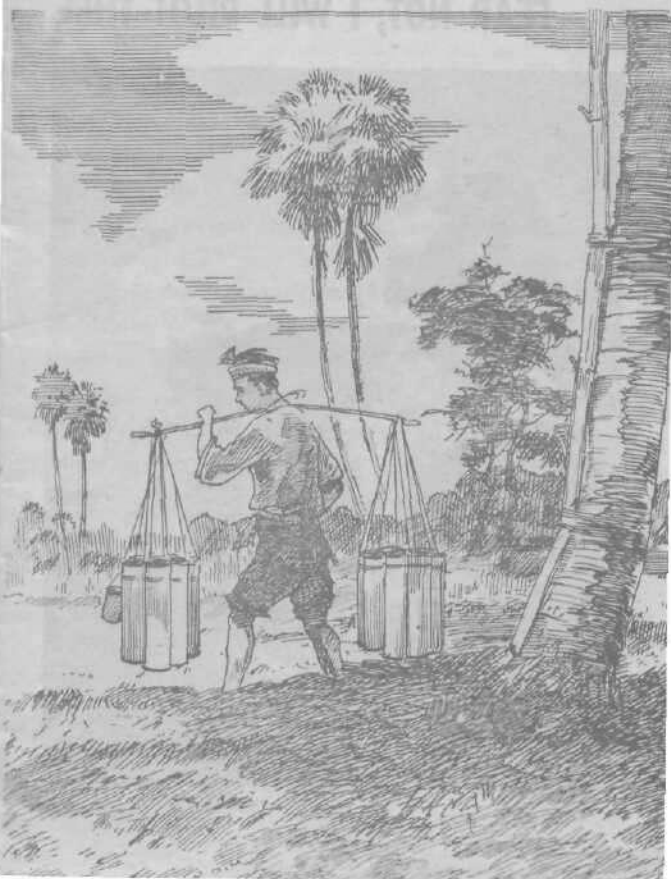


# Cambodia

Volume 7

Number 4



# Cambodia

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**FEAR NOT, I WILL PILOT THEE**



**BY DON FURNISS**

Two weeks aboard the Mission Launch, "Good News," plying the inland waterways of Takeo province leaves many thoughts for reminiscence: days of preparation, climaxed by the last minute rush of forgetting things; Bible School students spontaneously singing, "Jesus Saviour Pilot Me" just before the ropes were cast off; the constant churning and throbbing of the propeller as it bit the water and thrust us forward; dismay and consternation as we realized our forward motion had stopped because the propeller was at the bottom of a marshy, reed filled swamp; forming a sail from an old tarpaulin and hoisting it on a bamboo pole to "sail" into the town of Takeo; the lulling roll and slapping sound of the waves against the steel hull when the boat was tied and anchored; constant inquiry as to the places of deepest water, only at times to find that the wrong direction had been given and the mucky bottom held the hull fast; hands, slim and knarled, youthful and aged, reaching for the Gospel portions

telling them of the one about whom it is written, Fear not, I will pilot thee."

Designed and constructed by Rev. C. E. Thompson, the "Good News" is built for convenience rather than speed. Upon arrival at a destination, all the needs of living are contained within the boat itself. This is a great advantage and relief from the press of the crowd. Safety is also another factor that was taken into consideration during planning and construction of the boat. The superstructure is formed of steel channel beam and the hull itself of steel plate, thus making a collision with a half submerged yet floating log or tree trunk of little consequence. These conveniences and safety factors added to our ease as we departed with the promise, "Fear not, I will pilot thee."

To arrive in Takeo province by water it is necessary to travel the Bassak River to an island about 70 kilometers south of Phnom Penh. Then, by a series of streams and canals, Takeo's waterways become accessible. It was in a town south of Takeo city, on one of these waterways, that we received the most rewarding experience of the trip. We pulled into Kompong Yol just a little before sunset on a Sunday evening. That afternoon, through a mistake in identity, we had been shot at by some "civilian police" and were escorted to the main police barracks at Kompong Yol. As the chief of the post heard the

story, he became very apologetic, even to the point of offering us his house to sleep in, his food to eat and his fresh water to drink. This was the opening we needed. The next morning as the sun came up we were in the market place selling books and witnessing. Returning to the boat we were stopped by a young lady who asked if we were some of the "Jesus group." Upon questioning her we found that she was a Christian. Her husband, a non-believer, is stationed at the army post there and she had not been able to see or have fellowship with other Christians for many, many months. Her joy at seeing us was expressed by the radiance of her countenance which literally beamed. Has she been true to the Lord all alone in this miserable situation? At her insistence and arranging, we had an open air meeting just outside the army barracks. Here many of her friends, officers, enlisted men and their families heard the Gospel in song and word. Since we have come home I have learned this. Several months ago when the Vietnamese threatened to enter Cambodia, the soldiers were ordered to the border for defense. As they were leaving, their wives ran to the room of this woman, pleading with her to pray for the safety of their loved ones who were on their way to the front. These two instances give able answer to that question! She too is realizing the meaning of "Fear not, I will pilot thee."

To challenge our hearts to prayer were the words of a village chief of Phnom Ankor Borai. This island, according to Cambodian history, is the birth place of the nation. Thus it is steeped in Buddhist philosophy and sentiment. Our trip there was one out of curiosity for we had been told many stories as to the number of people living there, and had been forbidden by the police to hold a service. While we were anchored off shore and eating our noon meal, the village chief and his wife passed near by, returning in their dugout canoe from the main land market. As he paddled close to our boat, he greeted us in the normal fashion and began to tell us of his many duties and hardships. His answer to us, as we pressed home the claims of the Gospel, was from the 'Stateside stock pile,' "I have too much to do now, but in a little while I'll have more time for religion." He did, however, promise this, "I'll take the gospel portions, read them, and if they are all that you say they are, when you can come to our village, I will consider believing." The leading of the Lord caused this man to cross our path. An evident example of "Fear not, I will pilot thee."

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### **CAMBODIAN THINKING**

*When you are very sick, vow to give an elephant;  
but when the sickness has eased up, offer chicken  
eggs instead.*

## **DO YOU KNOW**

—that Rev. J. E. Doty and his family will be arriving in January from furlough. A hearty welcome back!

—that one new couple, the N. B. A. Ens, have been appointed to Cambodia for 1960, and possibly another couple from France may be appointed also.

## **REJOICING**

—that Dom Dek (near Siem Riep) has a new chapel. The Lord has honored the faith of Kru Ut and his small group of Christians.

—that the chapel in Takeo has been thoroughly remodeled. The face-lifting includes new flooring, new walls and new windows.

—that Kampot's Chapel, completed Christmas 1958, has been enlarged to accommodate the growing congregation.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

—Annual National Conference will be held at Takhmau in April. Pray "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." The National Church President wishes to resign at that time—who can take his place?

—Youth Conference will be held in June this year due to the change of school vacation.

## DEDICATING THIS HOUSE OF GOD





**BY HENRY HOLTON**

Promptly at three o'clock chairman Miss Miriam Ho called the meeting to order. Every available seat had been filled, so that latecomers had to resort to the local custom of pretending to sit on the end of a bench until its occupants eased over to make room for one more. The occasion was the dedication of the new C & M A Chinese Church of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Sunday afternoon, December 20, 1959. Friends of all churches and languages had gathered from far and near, probably 500 of them seated and standing in the auditorium, and many others outside.

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" was the opening hymn, sung in whatever dialect or language one preferred. Cantonese, Swatowese, Mandarin, Cambodian, Vietnamese, English, and Filipino all blended together—an amazing and pleasant sound to the listening angels. Prayer in Swatowese lifted us to the presence of God. Then the senior choir sang "Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus Our Blessed Re-

deemer," after which Miss Anna Lau, our other Bible woman, read Scripture, emphasizing " . . . ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Again we followed in whatever Bible was open before us.

Deacon Barnabas Lo, chairman of the building committee, summarized God's gracious help in the events leading up to this memorable day. Five years ago a fire had swept away about five hundred homes and our church. Four of these years we have been meeting in schoolrooms while waiting for permission to get land and permission to build a place of worship. The last year saw the fulfillment of our hopes. How many times problems were laid before the church for special prayer and sacrifice. How often situations arose calling for patience or drive, yielding or firmness. Those blessed with strength gave of their strength, and those blessed with money gave of their money, as the Chinese proverb goes. There were some things he did not mention. For example, he had sacrificed eight months of time to supervise buying and construction in order to save much of the Lord's money, and to assure us that the work was being done right. His wife's death in July was a test that the Lord could give only to a trusted servant. Now we were all rejoicing together in what the Lord had done.

After the junior choir of thirty voices sang an anthem with an Oriental tune, our Cambodian Field Chairman, Rev. H. M. Taylor, brought the dedication message in Cambodian, interpreted into Swatowese by Pastor PhiPhi.

He told us that heaven joins with God's children in the joy over our beautiful church. God's dwelling place is primarily a temple of His own making, the heart of a believer. So our dedication today must keep in mind not only this place of worship, but also the heart of every worshiper present. We invite God to come and fill this place. His presence will be evidenced by the light of His Word, by our practical obedience to His Son, and by the sanctifying presence of His Holy Spirit.

The dedicatory prayer was given with the congregation standing, and the deacons lined up beside the platform. We recognized God's abundant provision, spiritually and materially, during the time of preparation and construction. We committed to His service all the facilities and equipment, with ourselves as living members to be used as He pleases. We asked the Holy Spirit to sanctify and signify His approval by granting fruit to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Visitors were then given the opportunity for a word of greeting or congratulation, the usual Oriental

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## CAMBODIAN CUSTOM IN REVIEW



**BY DAVID W. ELLISON**

Preah Yoma Reak, the king of hell, permits the souls of the dead to visit their living friends and relatives...

One of the most important annual festivals of the Cambodians is called "Prachum." This takes place during the period of the waning moon in September and early October. On the night of the full moon at the beginning of this period, chants and sermons are recited in the Buddhist temples throughout the land. Early next morning and throughout the entire fortnight, the faithful go to the temples to present offerings to the priests and to listen to them chanting prayers. On the last night of the period, Preah Yoma Reak, the king of hell, is supposed to permit the souls of the departed to return during the obscurity of the moon, to visit their relatives and friends.

At this time the head of the house lights the candles and incense sticks and presents the offerings called "ben" made of glutinous rice cooked in coconut milk and mixed with other ingredients, as an

offering to the spirits of the dead, and invokes them to grant their descendants health, happiness and prosperity during the ensuing year. The following day, offerings are placed on little rafts of banana stalks and floated down the rivers with the request that the spirits of the departed return to their place and leave the living in peace. During this period, most people try to return to their homes, if at all possible, and there is a great deal of visiting done among friends and relatives accompanied usually with the presentation of sweet meats made of glutinous rice.

This nationally observed custom is essentially non-Christian, and underscores the fact that these people are "without God and without hope in the world."

"We owe to every child of sin,  
One chance at least of hope of heaven.  
Oh! By the love that brought us in,  
Let help and hope to them be given."

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*Mr. C. M. Westergren, Editor*

*Mrs. B. D. Dunning, Assistant Editor*

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custom for such occasions. Pastors of Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Chinese churches spoke a few words, and messages from distant friends reminded us that many were rejoicing with us. All this time photographers and flash bulbs were recording the occasion step by step. Occasionally the hum of voices here and there in the audience indicated that some were not understanding the languages being spoken. To us who love the Orient, this has ceased to be disconcerting. We have the choice under these circumstances either to put more energy into our remarks, or to bring them to a graceful conclusion.

After the Doxology, coming as is our custom at the end of the service, the Rev. A. G. Kowles led in the closing prayer and benediction. It was especially fitting, because his family had just returned from furlough, and had come up from Saigon for this happy reunion with the people among whom they had labored during most of their last term. What surprise and joy and gratitude!

The service ended, but the inevitable group picture at the front of the church and refreshments for the large crowd prolonged the happy fellowship for everyone. Memories linger, because God had been among us, refreshing His children with this gracious evidence of His faithfulness.



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