Holiday Greetings from the Missionaries in

Cambodia

EVERYBODY OUGHT TO KNOW

by Donald Furniss

Strange sounds drifted from the chapel one sultry Sunday afternoon. The words were not Cambodian, neither were they intelligible English. A strain of the ear and one could detect "Everybody ought to know who Jesus is". As I was trying to teach the newly formed young people's group the chorus in English, my mind flashed back to a conversation I had a few days before with one of the young fellows present. He had just been saved, several weeks ago to be exact, at the Youth Conference. Full of enthusiasm he returned home to witness to all who would cross his path. Confronted with many questions, some he could not answer, he came to me for help. I was handed a paper containing six of the most difficult. The answers to five were obvious, but the sixth—well here it is, think about it yourself. "If Jesus Christ is the true God then why have we not heard about him before this?" At first I imagined the interrogator to have been a rather indolent fellow seeking an argument. But I learned from Sim, the young Christian, that the question was asked in all seriousness of thought.

They have never heard, but why? This is the word that burned deep in my heart—WHY? Some would argue that this is a Buddhist nation. Yes, the national religion is a barrier but not an excuse. Perhaps it is because the missionary staff is so small. To this we will all agree, but can we hide our responsibility in such a flimsy covering as this? And so, on it could go. The fact remains, however, they have not yet heard about Him.

Who is at fault? Where shall we place responsibility? I feel that we can say without wavering the full responsibility rests squarely on the Church of Jesus Christ—you and I. They have not heard because we have not reached them with the truth. Is Jesus Christ the true God? Is He the one who died for their sins? Is He the One who can bring satisfaction to searching, longing hearts? If he is, then "Everybody ought to know."

THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

by Edythe Dunning

While the enemy of our souls seems to be gaining territory in Cambodia through subtle wicked means, is the Church of Christ progressing?

August was Victory Month for the Christian Cambodian Youth as over seventy-five young people gathered for three weeks to study God's Word. They come with hungry hearts desiring to know more about our Precious Redeemer, and excellent co-operation on their part made the fellowship even more precious. The Youth earnestly studied and took notes on the Word of God as it was given forth, not only in classes but during chapel.

The result thrilled our hearts as about twenty-five repented of sin and asked the Lord to come into their hearts. Then a majority found their way to the altar of prayer the closing Sunday morning after the preaching service to give themselves wholly to the Lord and to be filled with His Spirit—for power to witness, power to withstand the wiles of the enemy, and for several, power to stand absolutely alone, in spite of almost unbearable persecution and ridicule from their parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors, because of their love for the Lord.

They've counted the cost and have taken the step of faith. Will you stand in prayer with The Christian Youth of Cambodia—the Church of Tomorrow?

Volume 6 *Number 2*

Cambodia

is published bi-monthly by
The Cambodia Mission of The Christian & Missionary Alliance
to solicit prayer support and to inspire missionary interest.
We will gladly send copies free to anyone upon request.

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CAMBODIAN CUSTOM IN REVIEW

Usually the nearly one hundred thousand Cambodian Buddhist priests, clad in saffron yellow robes with begging bowls slung over their shoulders, go from house to house to receive the alms which the people give them. But for three months during the "Vosa" or rainy season, the order is reversed. The priests remain cloistered in the monasteries and the laymen and women go regularly to the temples to present them with their offerings.

At the conclusion of the "Vosa" period there is an interesting and colorful religious festival which takes place at night as do most Buddhist ceremonies. This particular "Bun" or merit - making festival is called Bandet Prateep and consists of making small rafts, usually of banana stalks about two feet or more square. In the center of this little raft is placed an artificial "tree" frequently made of tiny pieces of bamboo with paper or money fastened on as leaves. At the base of the "tree" are placed various offerings such as a handful of cooked rice, bananas, cigarettes, betel-nut and coins. The Prateep is illuminated by little oil lamps, candles and incense sticks. Then it is launched out on the river or lake as an offering.

Thousands of these little illuminated rafts bearing such simple offerings are carried by the current down the rivers of Cambodia. Frequently in the large cities, in addition to these smaller "Prateep," the river craft are brilliantly illuminated with many strange, fanciful designs which attract thousands of curious onlookers. Frequently too, the rafts, before proceeding far on their journey downstream, will be raided by boys and men who swim out and take the offerings for their own profit.

Various explanations have been given for the purpose of this ancient custom. The following is typical. It is an offering to the deified Earth and Water which, although unable to fully expiate sin, helps to lighten the burden.

It is the privilege and responsibility of your missionaries to tell these people of the "Supreme Sacrifice" of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the whole world, not just a little bit, but ALL. Then the true Prateep, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, will shine into these darkened hearts and dispell the darkness.

David W. Ellison