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EDITORS' NOTE: Overseas correspondent Mike Creswell and photographer Warren Johnson visited Cambodia to explore the struggling nation's social landscape, growing Christian church and Southern Baptist-sponsored work.

Cambodia: Killing fields becoming harvest fields Baptist Press
10/24/94
By Mike Creswell

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--"The killing field of man has become the harvest field of God."

Those words, left scribbled on a blackboard after a class in a Phnom Penh Baptist church, accurately sum up Cambodia in 1994.

Churches are organizing throughout long-troubled Cambodia, and Christian workers say the future looks good -- if the southeast Asian nation can avoid falling back into war and political collapse.

Christians, even nominal ones, still make up a tiny fraction of Cambodia's 8.5 million people in the predominately Buddhist country. But workers estimate Cambodia may already have from 10,000 to 20,000 evangelicals and perhaps 30,000 Roman Catholics.

Exact figures -- like answers to Cambodia's perplexing problems -- are elusive.

"We're seeing groups springing up all over the place," says Bruce Carlton, who works with Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid agency. After years of appalling violence, Carlton and other Christian workers say Cambodia is "wide open" for the gospel -- and people are responding.

More than 160 congregations are scattered about the country, according to Carlton. Many of the new congregations meet in homes or outside. In the heady rush to get organized, many groups have no denominational labels. They gather around someone who can read the Bible.

Baptists now have mission churches or "preaching points" in most of Cambodia's provinces and have established a Bible-training program in the capital. A Southern Baptist aid worker helps in church-planting work, but Baptists from other parts of Asia also play a key role.

Southern Baptists worked with Cambodians for decades when it was impossible to place missionaries in Cambodia itself. In Thailand, for example, Southern Baptist missionaries Dan and Fan Cobb led more than 2,000 Cambodian refugees to faith in Christ. Those Christians carried their new faith all over the world -- including the United States -- and a few have returned to Cambodia.

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Today's promising church scene would have been thought impossible 20 years ago, but the challenge is massive.

Left destitute after decades of war, Cambodia today is one of the least-developed countries in Asia -- poor in roads, health care, education, housing and most other areas. War continually threatens to swell from isolated pockets to nationwide fighting. Most reports describe the government as shaky at best. The dirt-poor economy is equally unsteady.

Such factors leave Christian workers anxious to reach as many Cambodians for Christ as possible, then quickly train them to function in the faith without depending on outside help. Leaders face the usual problems of moving new Christians into positions of leadership within the new churches.

"Cambodians don't want colonialization. They don't want dependence on outsiders," says Chhon Phan Kong, director of Cambodian Christian Services, a contact office for a dozen of the Christian agencies in the country.

Christian leaders expect some instability as Cambodia emerges from shadows cast by one of the most violent conflicts in modern history.

The communist Khmer Rouge still holds about a tenth of the country -- and remains convinced it can regain power, according to reports. Its forces at times launch attacks from areas they hold, and major battles with government troops follow. Some of the new Baptist churches sit within a few miles of these war zones.

Khmer Rouge forces overthrew the Cambodian government in 1975 and established the republic of Democratic Kampuchea with Pol Pot as premier. Pol Pot's plan: "cleanse" the masses from outside influences and start over with "pure" communist ideology.

Pol Pot's regime forcibly relocated the populations of Phnom Penh and other urban locations to rural areas, set up forced-labor camps and disrupted an entire generation of the Khmer people, as ethnic Cambodians call themselves.

The educated and all others suspected as "enemies" of the regime -- including Christians -- were systematically exterminated, probably more than 1 million people. Hundreds of thousands of others died from malnutrition and disease. Many Cambodians fled the country.

Of about 10,000 Christians in Cambodia in 1970, an estimated 9,000 died during the Khmer Rouge reign of terror.

Today museums displaying masses of human skulls scream quietly about the "killing fields" where innocent civilians were executed. A museum in Phnom Penh preserves a school that Khmer Rouge forces converted to a prison and torture chamber. Photographs lining the walls show some of the estimated 16,000 people who died horrible deaths there. Christian workers who arrived in the country several years ago saw open graves with exposed bones.

Vietnam invaded in 1979 and established its sponsored government. A U.N.-sponsored peace process led to withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and brought some degree of accord in 1991 among most Cambodian factions.

Establishment of a new government, although shaky, gave a breathing space that allowed Christian workers to enter the country -- many doing double duty as aid workers. But real freedom of religion didn't arrive until after the United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC) entered the country to help organize the elections of May 1993.

When he first arrived in 1990, Carlton recalls, just 10 Christian house groups met in Phnom Penh. He had to put his name on a government list before he could even attend church.

"Christians were very timid to be out in the open," he says.

These days the most positive thing the government does about religion is nothing, workers agree. Some two years ago the government abandoned its efforts to control religious expression. Now workers say they're free to worship, teach, evangelize and distribut materials.

Earlier this year some Christian workers even hoped for good results in negotiations with the government over returning church properties seized during the Pol Pot regime.

But Christian workers are evangelizing a scarred people. Virtually every person who was alive during the 1970s carries memories of suffering and horror experienced during Pol Pot days. Few young people born since have escaped the long-term effects of the terror.

Allison Blair, who works with a Christian humanitarian aid organization, talked with a 25-year-old Cambodian man who saw his father die when the Khmer Rouge strung him up in a tree and set fire to him.

"I find it incredible that the young man is walking around with that in his consciousness," she says.

"Dealing with people who have gone through such a trauma is a very heavy strain," adds Bruce Carlton. Part of the strain is spiritual.

"That drains you more than anything," he says. "You're living in a land permeated with hatred. And even when participating with new Christians and churches, you're dealing with all kinds of those issues -- hatred, envy, distrust. It's in every relationship. It takes a lot of energy to build those relationships, build trust and get church leaders reconciled with each other.

"The Khmer Rouge tried to kill religion in this country. They failed, but they did leave a spiritual void. A whole generation here has grown up basically without any way to fill that void. Now God is using that void and filling it in a mighty way."

Cambodia is considered a Buddhist country. Some Christians fear that Buddhism increasingly will become the "national" religion and Cambodian leaders will see non-Buddhists as somehow not fully Cambodian.

But many Cambodians respond to the gospel, Christian workers say, not only because of its power but because Buddhism has only a shallow hold on people. And many seek spiritual meaning for their lives now that they have the freedom to do so.

The Bible's message makes an impact. Cambodians hearing New Testament accounts of demons for the first time don't blink an eye, one worker says. They know of demons from life in their villages. Cambodians who have become Christians sometimes speak of being delivered from demons.

In earlier times Hinduism thrived in the land. The outline of Angkor Wat, the ancient temple complex of Hindu origins, adorns the national flag. But smaller, serpent-festooned temples about the country also recall a time when Hinduism was the predominant religion.

Both the artistic imagery of the temples -- and the sensations created in Christians who visit them -- suggest satanic connections. Indeed, many Christians in Cambodia feel the oppression of satanic domination.

"Cambodia is a stronghold of the devil," says Kreg Mallow, a Southern Baptist dentist with World Concern, a U.S.-based agency of Christian ministry. "It was one of the last countries (in Asia) to get missionaries and has the lowest percentage of believers. It's starting to break but it's just in the beginning stages."

He concludes: "We need a lot of prayer for it to continue. There's a spiritual battle going on now. Only the love of God will change this country, no matter how much money you throw at it."

The change may be coming. Pointing to the rapid spread of the Christian faith during the past four years, Carlton marvels: "There's no other way to describe it except the Holy Spirit is doing it!"

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(BP) photos (four horizontal, two vertical) accompanying this story and the Cambodia-related stories below were mailed Oct. 21 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

**Cambodia's needs
keep Carltons busy**

By Mike Creswell

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia (BP)--The Sangker River is shallow and muddy pumpkin orange when it passes through Battambang, Cambodia's second-largest city.

But it's cool and shallow enough for dozens of children to splash in when a hot tropical sun sears the afternoon.

It also was deep enough for Baptist leaders Leng Sovann and Sar Soth to baptize more than 30 new believers earlier this year. Church members stood on the grassy banks praying and singing during the service.

Uniformed soldiers stopped on the banks, and swimming children paddled closer to see the curious spectacle of adults being dipped under the swirling muddy water. One observer paid especially close attention. He was Bruce Carlton, coordinator of Cambodian work for Cooperative Services International (CSI), the Southern Baptist aid organization.

Earlier that day Carlton visited Sovann and gave him pointers on how to baptize and what the Bible teaches about its meaning. In keeping with the approach followed in Cambodia, Carlton works mostly in the background with leaders, rather than doing baptisms himself.

Since Carlton and his wife, Gloria, from Georgetown, Ky., and Elkins, Ark., respectively, arrived four years ago, evangelical Christian missions have sprung up across the country. Many have been Baptist.

"I need to tell you how fast the Lord is moving," says Carlton. "In June 1992, when we returned from furlough, there were no Baptist churches. Exactly two years later there are 16 Baptist congregations and 10 preaching points reaching into seven of Cambodia's 21 provinces."

He adds, awe edging into his voice: "The Lord has just really blessed."

Now a strong Baptist church thrives in Phnom Penh, the capital city, where the Carltons live. Pastor Toun Kakda is a solid leader and the church hosts a training program to equip rural leaders -- Baptists and others -- across the country.

Since training Kakda as a church planter, Carlton has trained 23 other leaders now ministering throughout Cambodia. One man, Savoeun at Kompong Chan, started four new groups in six weeks. Lee Sovann works with three groups in Battambang.

Carlton invests his time in training such leaders who in turn will witness in diverse places. These days the most responsive places are rural -- outside Phnom Penh and Battambang. About 85 percent of Cambodia's 8.5 million people live in rural areas.

Carlton believes training Cambodians to work in these responsive areas is the best way to multiply his influence. The approach also dovetails with the two hats he wears in his work.

As a CSI development worker, Carlton has sparked humanitarian aid programs that help people physically.

"We see humanitarian aid as part of our response as Christians to minister to all the needs of people," he explains. "At the same time I'm unashamedly a Southern Baptist Christian from the United States actively involved with the local Christian community. I do all my activities for the church as an individual Christian, not in my capacity with CSI."

His caution in defining his role is understandable. In some restrictive parts of the world, government pressures require CSI workers to keep much more separate from Christian ministry.

Although the Cambodian government has loosened controls on religion, national laws still prohibit proselytizing. So far, Carlton's work within the fledgling Cambodian Baptist community has drawn no reprisals.

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CSI humanitarian and social projects in Cambodia include a cloth-weaving project geared toward helping Cambodians develop self-sufficiency. Southern Baptists built several concrete-block buildings in Phnom Penh for less than \$8,000, then provided four wooden, foot-powered looms and four spring-driven warp machines, enough to set up a small mill for cloth production.

Another building houses a woodworking shop. Later, classes will be started to teach poultry production and hair cutting. Just outside the building are two fish ponds used to raise fish for food and to make fish meal for animal food. Similar projects are planned in other areas. CSI also has provided three English teachers in recent years.

Such simple projects are tuned to Cambodia's current economic conditions. Most people in the country are rural farmers. Many live in simple thatch houses set on stilts; the ground under the house often becomes a shaded living room.

When fire destroyed the homes of some 1,200 families in the Chhba Ampou district of Phnom Penh last year, CSI provided \$10,000 for emergency rice, dried fish and cooking oil.

Carlton also helps the national government office overseeing occupational health and safety. CSI has provided computer and laboratory equipment, building assistance and other assistance so the office can do a better job of looking after industrial workers.

CSI also distributes AIDS awareness brochures, and it funds a community health worker in the Battambang area. The worker presents seminars through churches and other groups to make the public aware of the growing presence of AIDS, which is increasing faster in Asia than any other part of the world. Prostitution is a major industry in Phnom Penh. One street is known as "Waving Street" because so many prostitutes try to wave down customers.

In Kompong Thom province, CSI has appropriated funds to reconstruct a community medical clinic. That project is on hold for now, because warfare has erupted in the area. The last time Carlton visited there he had to have a police escort.

In a new venture, CSI will bring in three short-term workers to help Cambodia's national Olympic committee and teach at the national sports school. The three volunteers are expected to have a tremendous influence on Cambodia's national sports program and at the same time be good ambassadors for Christ.

In his busy rounds, Carlton uses a four-wheel-drive truck because of the poor roads that predominate. On trips to outlying areas he often uses motorbikes, the omnipresent vehicle of choice for most Cambodians. The two-wheelers work better on dirt roads and paths through the underbrush.

He stays in constant touch with home and two Southern Baptist volunteers via a cellular telephone he carries in a holster on his belt. The phone is a necessity in a country where warfare could spring up at any moment.

Gloria Carlton is a full-time partner with her husband. She helps manage bookkeeping and is involved in women's ministry at Russey Keo Khmer Baptist Church in the city. Often when he works in the villages, she winds up being the one to check on the progress of a new project or see that the thread supply gets to the weaving class. She also has helped establish a basket-weaving class for women at the church.

Heat is a year-round presence in Cambodia. You take a shower, get refreshed, walk outside, then instantly feel the need for another shower. Electricity is often off, so a back-up generator is required, but diesel fuel is too expensive to run it for more than a few hours a day.

Security is a constant worry. Theft is common in Phnom Penh. "It's always there, even though you don't always feel it," says Carlton. "You learn to live with it." A heavy gate blocks the entrance to the Carlton driveway.

Health also is a constant concern. Medical facilities are limited, and insects carry several types of malaria and other diseases. Drinking water must be purified.

As peace has brought increasing prosperity to Phnom Penh, small but Western-styled grocery stores have opened to compete with street markets, at least for Westerners with dollar incomes. Yet rents have risen sharply, along with the cost of many other items.

The Carltons' daughters, Elizabeth, 11, and Mary, 10, attend an international school up the street from their home. Plans call for the school to go through grade 10 next year. Eventually the Carltons may have to decide between home schooling and a boarding school in another country. Neither is an easy option.

The Carltons are happy with the results they're seeing in their work. But they acknowledge living in Cambodia for four years has taken a toll.

"I'm 38 going on 50," says Carlton with a grin, "and you can quote me on that."

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EDITORS' NOTE: See (BP) photo information following first Cambodia story above.

Cambodian Christians:
the first generation

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
10/24/94

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--Nearly 20 years after Pol Pot's communists began their campaign to destroy religion -- and almost everything else -- in Cambodia, a new generation of Christians is rising from the ashes.

Here are several of them:

-- When the Pol Pot regime began its slaughter, thousands of Cambodians left the country in fear for their lives. Thavy V. Nhem was one. But unlike most others, he came back. Today he has a secular job in Phnom Penh, but spends all his spare time helping spread the gospel among his fellow countrymen.

Nhem became a Christian in a Cambodian congregation sponsored by South Main Baptist Church in Houston. He was ordained and began serving as pastor of a new Cambodian church in Austin, Texas. He went back to Cambodia in 1989 after learning it was possible to visit there.

"In 1989 the word 'Christian' wasn't used," he recalls. He tried to locate Christians, but many of them -- some in his own family -- refused to talk to him because government agents were following him. He made several subsequent visits.

A relative in the government helped him arrange visits by Christian groups. Houston's South Main Church set up a fund to provide Bibles and other literature for Cambodia. During one visit he helped get 5,000 New Testaments printed in Thailand and distributed in Cambodia. Nhem also helped several Christian workers get into provinces where guerrilla fighting continued.

In June 1993 he moved to Phnom Penh. He assisted Russey Keo Khmer Baptist Church in setting up its training program for rural church leaders and helps minister in many other ways.

These days he views his fellow countrymen through different eyes.

"In 1979 they got rid of Pol Pot. They're happy because they have something to eat," he observes. "But seeing Cambodia through Christian eyes, I must say they're still dead. They're spiritually dead ... I'm here to preach Christ."

He tells of an event in a town near Phnom Penh. A house belonging to a Christian burned down all around a Bible, which was left unharmed. Even books on top of the Bible burned completely, but the Bible itself was left unharmed. The event made a big impact on nonbelieving neighbors who saw it, Nhem says.

"Miracles are happening here," he says quietly but firmly.

-- Small-framed Sok Eung looks younger than his 23 years. A couple of years ago the young rice farmer in Tul Ambel, a village of about 500 people, was a Buddhist, though not a faithful one, he admits.

A medium told him he had evil spirits, and he believed her. He could feel their presence in his life. They made him ill and disturbed him.

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Then one day Toun Kakda, pastor of a Baptist church in Phnom Penh, came to his village with a Cambodian Christian woman from Australia who had returned for an evangelistic visit. They led Sok to Christ.

"I knew that God had truly saved me," he says. "After I became a Christian, I know the evil spirits left my body. I fell over and I felt them leave."

Now he leads a group of about 45 adults and 70 children in Bible study meetings and witnesses for Christ in his village in the Bosaik district of Kompong Speu province. Not everyone responds when he visits to share the gospel, "but most people will listen."

Sok was young during the reign of Pol Pot, but remembers having to move to another village with all his neighbors. "Many people in the village died," he recalls. But ask Sok today about the future of Cambodia and his face brightens. "If the people of Cambodia would come to believe in Jesus, our country would indeed prosper," he says.

-- Creation got the attention of Sar Soth, now a Baptist leader in Battambang.

"I believe that God created the land and everything -- and that the Spirit of God is still living," says Sar, who read the Bible and became convinced that God exists.

At age 50 Sar has gray hair, a fact that helps him when he witnesses to a people who respect age. He invites them to worship with his group in the community of Chamkar Somraung.

"I'm an older man in my village, so when I became a believer it made a big impression. Even those who didn't believe respected me too much to say anything," he says.

The Christian faith has eased his soul, but life is still hard for him and his family. Earlier this year he and his wife had their 11th child. As a schoolteacher, he earns about \$10 a month, not even enough for food.

During Pol Pot's reign in the 1970s, Sar was sent to be a rice farmer. The family faced a life of constant hard work, deprivation and fear. One of his children died; the family was so short of food his wife could produce no milk for the infant.

Life is still hard, but there are a dozen Christians in his family. They threw out their Buddhist idols and no longer burn incense for them.

-- Sen Chan Dara studied hard in high school because he wanted to become a doctor. But when Pol Pot took over Cambodia, that dream died. Sen was forced to quit his studies and sent to dig irrigation ditches and plant rice. A brother, a sister and her husband were killed. He and another brother and sister became sick, but there was no medicine.

He tried to escape once but was caught. When he returned later, Sen found his house destroyed. He was forced to live in a refugee camp until 1993, when he returned to Battambang. Now he works with two humanitarian groups.

In Battambang he met Leng Sovann, who told him about Jesus. He also became friends with Paulo Rosa, a Southern Baptist English teacher who talked with him about Christianity. Sen was baptized in May 1994.

Sen lectures to churches, schools and other groups about the dangers of AIDS as part of a program funded by Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization,

To make his point at an evangelical church in Battambang, he had the audience stand and move about the room as he illustrated there's no way to tell which person may have AIDS. The audience listened.

-- When Pol Pot came to power in the mid-1970s, Toun Kakda was a student. In 1975 the Khmer Rouge killed his father because he was a policeman. Toun was 22 at the time.

"They had planned to kill me too," he says. "I didn't know it then, but now I know the Lord spared my life."

He survived by fading into the woodwork, trying hard not to be noticed. The Khmer Rouge first put him to work in a kitchen, next tearing down bridges and making charcoal.

"We didn't have set hours," he recalls. "We would get up in the morning and work all day, stopping only to eat. We would go deep into the forest to cut down trees. We had to pull the logs out of the forest on carts by hand."

Toun shakes his head in puzzlement when asked to explain the Khmer Rouge, who killed so many of their fellow countrymen:

"It was like they were in a stupor, didn't know what they were doing."

After the Vietnamese overthrew the Khmer Rouge, he moved to Phnom Penh and took a job with the merchant marines working on an oil tanker. He moved up through the ranks until in 1990 he was a foreman helping train new recruits.

In 1990 he visited an uncle, Im Chroun, an evangelical pastor, who took him to a church service. "I had a joyful time, because that day I learned God provided me with a plan of salvation to save me from my sins. I realized I had sin in my life," he recalls.

"So that Sunday I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. And it has been that way from that day forward." His wife made a decision for Christ three months later.

Toun continued working as a sailor until 1991. While reading 1 Samuel, he felt God leading him to leave the ship that was tainted with non-Christian ways. He began working at Russey Keo Khmer church -- now one of the largest evangelical congregations in Phnom Penh with a good building.

He keeps busy witnessing and starting new church groups. More than 400 people in the surrounding community have made decisions for Christ, he estimates, though not all have remained faithful. Toun goes into a community and sets up several showings of a film about the life of Christ. He begins to work in Bible studies with those who profess faith in Christ.

One of the best "selling points" of the gospel continues to be the power of a changed life, he maintains.

"Once they understand the gospel clearly, they begin to have a much better behavior and attitude toward their family and relatives," he says. "And when their relatives see that, (they) often come to Christ through them."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed Oct. 21 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Brazilian 'good ole boy' goes
to Cambodia via Tennessee

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
10/24/94

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia (BP)--Put Paulo Rosa down as just a "good ole boy" from Tennessee -- and Brazil -- who's working in Cambodia for the moment.

He speaks perfect English, with just enough Tennessee twang to be pleasant. These days he uses that well-pronounced English, a second language for him, to teach Cambodians in the city of Battambang.

Rosa grew up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His family was Baptist and he became a Christian when he was young. "I went through all the departments that my church had, from Sunday school to Royal Ambassadors," he recalls.

At age 17 he worked at the Baptist publishing house in Rio de Janeiro as an office assistant. While there he became friends with Philby Harris, at that time a consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Harris gave him lessons in English, which Rosa already had begun to study.

"That began a real love for the English language," Rosa says.

In 1981 he helped with a Texas Baptist partnership that sent hundreds of Texans to Brazil. He dreamed of living in the United States -- an impossible dream for a Brazilian without a big bank account.

Later he met Southern Baptists Cecil and Lois Russell of Knoxville, Tenn., and they became friends. Eventually the Russells became a second set of parents for Rosa. They offered to help him attend Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn. The dream came true.

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At Carson-Newman, Rosa discovered he had a gift for languages and earned a bachelor's degree in languages in just three years. He was active in Baptist Student Union. At Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., he received a master's degree in religious education.

Eventually he looked into the Southern Baptists' International Service Corps (ISC), a program for short-term work overseas. He flipped through job requests from over the world. When he saw the request for an English teacher in Cambodia, "it clicked," he says.

The job description called for him to live in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. But during orientation he visited a Baptist church made up of Khmer people in Richmond, Va., and an elderly Khmer woman told him he was going to serve in Battambang.

"No, it's Phnom Penh," he replied. The next day he got a letter telling him he had been transferred to Battambang.

There Rosa teaches English to about 70 public school students and to health-care workers. His students also include 27 public school teachers. He also teaches the Bible and spends a lot of his time meeting with local Christians.

Rosa marvels at how God can use a native Portuguese speaker from Brazil to teach English in Cambodia. But the certainty of being in God's will keeps him there.

That certainty comes in handy. Although Cambodia's second-largest city, Battambang is more an overgrown market town than a city. There's little to do in free time. The war front where the Cambodian army fights communist Khmer Rouge rebels lies only about 12 miles from the town, so authorities impose an 8 p.m. curfew. When the wind is right, cannons can be heard booming in the distance.

By sundown soldiers patrol all the major roads as the city braces for possible attack from guerrillas. Such an attack came earlier this year, and Rosa went to Phnom Penh for two weeks until the heavy fighting stopped.

Rosa witnesses and distributes Bibles and tracts whenever possible, but adds the personal touch.

"If you go ahead and share the Lord but without establishing a relationship with a Khmer, he won't hear you," he says. So Rosa majors on getting to know people.

He even started wearing a cross around his neck, something Brazilian Baptists would view as heresy because of their strongly anti-Catholic stance. But Rosa says it's a good conversation opener in Cambodia, because people ask him what the cross signifies.

"Besides, I got tired of seeing Buddha necklaces," he says with a grin.

In class, where preaching would be inappropriate, he publicly asks God to bless people and tells them he will pray for them.

Even misfortune can be a witness, he found. One night he forgot to lock up his "moto," as he calls his motorbike. It was stolen. Everybody who knew him told him it was gone for good. Nobody gets a stolen motorbike back in Cambodia. But Rosa recovered his motorbike.

"It was a form of testimony," he declares. "The Lord answers prayers."

Cambodians may be surprised at that idea, but not Rosa. The Lord has been answering his prayers for a long time.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed Oct. 21 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

Relief effort 'God's instrument,'
say Haitian Baptist officials By Tim Yarbrough

Baptist Press
10/24/94

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti (BP)--Planned Southern Baptist relief efforts in Haiti are "God's instrument" that will help bring change to the politically and socially ravaged nation, say Haitian Baptists.

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"As Lazarus was buried and resurrected, so will the Baptist Convention of Haiti" rise again, said an emotional Delinse Jean, president of the convention.

The convention offices were burned the day after a September 1991 coup ousted freely elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Most of the building is still under renovation.

Jean and other Haitian Baptist officials met Oct. 19 with a delegation of Southern Baptist officials assessing the country's needs.

"We may have many political and social problems in our country, but we know that Jesus Christ is the only solution," Jean told the group. "We know during these difficult times we must not miss the opportunity to share Christ with the people."

"The presence of the Southern Baptist delegation here is a response to our prayers," he added. "This is an instrument God is using for change in the country."

The assessment team arrived in Haiti Oct. 16 to lay the groundwork that will bring more than 200 Southern Baptist volunteers and thousands of dollars to Haiti for relief efforts. The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and Foreign Mission Board are jointly sponsoring the relief effort.

Haitian Baptist officials met a delegation of the team on the second floor of the burned-out headquarters of Haitian Baptists. The delegation included Peggy Rutledge, Southern Baptist missionary to Haiti; Ed Brentham, International Service Corps volunteer; Jim Palmer, missionary to Nicaragua; Mickey Gaison of the Brotherhood Commission; and John LaNoue of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Dialogue during the meeting was interrupted at times by the sound of U.S. military helicopters passing overhead.

Relief efforts planned will include food distribution, water well drilling and well refurbishing, along with basic medical care.

The top concern for Southern Baptist planners is organizing food distribution. Without food, the situation will quickly turn to chaos in a country where people are hungry and still feeling the effects of an international embargo.

Southern Baptist volunteer teams to arrive in coming weeks will handle the packaging and distribution of "family packs" -- containing basic commodities of rice, beans, oil and flour, as well as an evangelistic tract. Haitian Baptists are being asked to give out tickets to help ensure orderly distribution of the packs.

Problems in transporting supplies and scarcity of resources will limit food distribution initially, Mrs. Rutledge told Haitian Baptists. Haitian churches will be asked to help with the distribution effort -- both as a way to meet their members' needs and as a means of outreach to needy families in their communities.

Plans to secure free relief food do not appear to be an option at present because of the constant looting of storage facilities. Up to 4,000 break-ins at food warehouse facilities have depleted more than \$3 million in relief food, according to officials of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Restocking the warehouses will take another three months.

Although no free relief food remains, Port-au-Prince does have food supplies that can be purchased for distribution, USAID reports.

Unless the food distribution effort is well-organized, what Southern Baptists do in Haiti could "turn against us quickly," said Joel Dorsinville, Haitian Baptist convention vice president.

"After three years of an embargo, this project is very important," Dorsinville said. "But sometimes the mouth that is receiving the food can bite the hand that's feeding it."

A local pastor attending the meeting added: "There is a great need when you give to one person and not to the other one -- you can create more of a problem. If that happens, you will never go there (to that community) again."

Evidence of failed food relief efforts dot the country. In St. Marc, 60 miles northwest of Port-au-Prince, a giant CARE warehouse stands in ruins. Local vendors now line the street selling food, clothing and other goods beside the facility.

Southern Baptist missionary Mark Rutledge said a school meal program that at one time fed 14,000 children was stopped in 1988 -- in part because of problems associated with storing food.

The food distribution may be limited at first, but the key to support of Haitian churches is knowing the efforts will continue, said Emmanuel Pierre, Baptist convention executive secretary.

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(BP) photos (one horizontal, one vertical) accompanying this story and the one below mailed to state Baptist newspapers Oct. 21 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

**Volunteers, equipment needed
for Haitian relief effort**

By Tim Yarbrough

**Baptist Press
10/24/94**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--Volunteer teams will start work in Haiti as early as Nov. 9 as part of Southern Baptist relief efforts in the country.

A Southern Baptist assessment team has established a plan that will use more than 200 volunteers to respond to physical and spiritual needs of the people of the Caribbean nation -- a nation reeling from years of political strife and an international embargo.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission are jointly sponsoring relief work in Haiti. The agencies are working with the Baptist Convention of Haiti to set the plan in motion.

On Oct. 20 the assessment team finalized the first phase of a plan that will distribute "family packs" of basic commodities to needy Haitians. Initially the effort will focus on the Port-au-Prince area; it may expand to other parts of the country.

Here's the plan:

A 12-volunteer construction team -- two diesel mechanics, two plumbers, three carpenters, two block layers, a cook and two concrete helpers -- will work in Haiti Nov. 9-19 to renovate the Baptist convention's annex offices in Port-au-Prince. The annex will be used as a staging area for volunteers and supplies. Sleeping and cooking facilities will be built at the annex to house and feed up to 24 volunteers.

After the renovation work has been completed, the first 10-person food distribution team will arrive Nov. 19 for two weeks of work. "Food teams" will consist of a cook and nine packaging and distribution workers. During the food distribution effort 17 teams will be needed.

Repair and replacement of an estimated 500 of the country's water wells is projected to start in early 1995. Volunteer teams of four men with plumbing skills will be recruited for well repair. By February the plan calls for medical teams to work with churches and schools to provide for basic health care needs.

"Only God knows what the spiritual impact will be," said Mark Rutledge, Southern Baptist missionary to Haiti. "It will show people that the Haitian Baptists and Southern Baptists care about the people of Haiti It's a tremendous opportunity to witness to the people."

With the return of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, optimism among Haitians is running high. Everywhere drawings, paintings and banners depict Aristide as a hero. Many thank the United States for its show of force that forced the military government out of office.

Russell Griffin, a Brotherhood official and assessment team member, said volunteers who come to Haiti will be equipped with everything they need to live and work in the country.

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"The work will be hard and it will be hot. But there is the positive element of a group of Christians coming together for a common cause to make a difference in Haiti," he said.

Mickey Caisson, Brotherhood's disaster relief director, will coordinate volunteer response in Haiti.

"Our goal is to provide volunteers with an opportunity to share Christ and meet human needs at the same time," said Caisson. "This won't be easy, but nothing of eternal concern ever is."

The assessment team identified several immediate equipment needs for Haiti relief work.

"We are accepting monetary donations for the purchase of a large household refrigerator, chest freezer, gas stove with large oven, a heavy-duty washing machine, two new or used four-wheel-drive diesel trucks, two new or used four-wheel, all-terrain vehicles and construction tools," said Griffin.

Southern Baptists interested in volunteering for the Haiti relief effort may contact their state Brotherhood department. Or they may contact Rusty Griffin or Mickey Caisson at the Brotherhood Commission at 1-800-280-1891 or (901) 722-3787. Those interested in making a financial contribution to the relief effort may send it to Southern Baptist World Relief, Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104 or to the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767. More information on the volunteer relief effort may be obtained by calling the numbers listed above.

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Yarbrough, a Brotherhood writer-photographer, accompanied the Southern Baptist assessment team to Haiti.

**Rankin underscores worship
as the reason for missions**

By Cameron Crabtree

Baptist Press
10/24/94

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Worship is the proper motivation for missions, Jerry Rankin, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board president, told students at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

"The goal of our Lord is that all the nations of the world would worship and exalt him. Because that worship does not yet exist, we do missions," said Rankin who, along with 30 missionaries and FMB staff members, spoke at a global missions emphasis on the seminary's Mill Valley campus Oct. 17-21.

"We're seeing unprecedented harvest on the mission field," Rankin said, noting more than 262,750 baptisms resulted from Southern Baptist-related missionary efforts last year. "The gospel is not just a message -- it is something that is happening."

Golden Gate President William O. Crews welcomed the FMB's partnership with the seminary: "As a seminary where the world has come to live around us, it is fitting to have the Foreign Mission Board on our campus to share in a missions emphasis."

Missionaries and FMB staff members spoke in classes, provided chapel services and hosted exhibits and activities. Chapel speakers urged students to respond obediently to God's leading.

"The time to answer the Lord is when he speaks," said Randy Sprinkle, director of the FMB's international prayer strategy office. "But we must decide whether we will follow him whenever, and in whatever he leads."

"God has called each one of us into a wonderful adventure with Jesus Christ," said Fred Dallas, a graduate of Golden Gate serving in Norway. He was a sports chaplain at the Olympic Games in Spain and in Norway.

The Great Commission is an invitation to carry out God's purpose in the current generation, FMB leaders said.

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"Two thousand years ago our Lord told believers to go, and that message comes echoing down through the years to you and me," said Lewis Myers, FMB vice president for "World A" strategies for countries across northern Africa and southern Asia populated with hundreds of people groups who have not heard the gospel or where access to the gospel message is severely restricted.

"If the 'good news' is really good news, then you and I will do all we can to make sure all people everywhere will have the opportunity to respond to it," Myers said. "Our goal is to eliminate World A as defined by access (to the gospel)."

FMB leaders noted remarkable spiritual renewal throughout the world.

"An enormous transformation is taking place," declared Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president at the mission agency. "Something has happened that is making this the most responsive world that the gospel has ever known. The gospel is making an impact as never before."

But simply preaching the good news alone is not enough for the FMB, Kammerdiener said, noting the FMB's purpose is wrapped up in two words -- evangelism and churches.

"The task is never complete until the gospel has been preached in culturally relevant ways and believers have been formed into little colonies of heaven we call churches," Kammerdiener said.

Rob Springs, a Golden Gate graduate serving in Korea, reminded students that even though the FMB has more than 4,000 missionaries serving abroad, missions work takes place wherever people are encountered.

"The world is full of forgotten and neglected people," Springs said. "Some of them are in faraway lands and some of them are right next door to you and your churches."

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