

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Late Summer, 2018

How I found myself in a lively discussion about God with these government officials

I recently took the infamous Cambodian drivers license test in Phnom Penh. Foreigners are required to sit for the English version, but it's so poorly translated as to be often unintelligible. You just have to memorize the "correct" unintelligible answer for each of the unintelligible questions. After barely passing the written exam, I befriended the head of the DMV and volunteered to "edit" the English translation—an offer that could have been seen as offensive. Instead, he was absolutely delighted. A few minutes later he called to say that the Director General of the Department of Land Transportation of the Ministry of Public Works in Phnom Penh (equivalent to an undersecretary in America) wanted to meet me at 4 o'clock. My driving test was at two, but he assured me there would be plenty of time.

At 2 o'clock I was disappointed to find my file folder at the bottom of a stack of 20, making it unlikely that I would be at the 4 o'clock meeting. (All DMVs, like all McDonalds, are the same across the world.) Plus I was nervous; few foreigners pass the driving test the first time or even the second. Some have to take it 5 or 6 times!

But then who should appear at the test area but my new friend, the head of the DMV himself! I knew immediately what he was there for. He muttered something to the examiners about helping proctor a test or two on that unusually busy afternoon. He casually thumbed through the stack of file folders, and then pulled out my folder from the bottom. Indeed, the last shall be first.

Later I joked that I probably would have had to run over someone to fail. My special examiner was unusually tolerant of my driving. I was out in 10 minutes and had plenty of time to make the 4 o'clock appointment with him and the Director General.

At the Ministry of Public Works, His Excellency greeted me warmly and expressed appreciation for the offer to help with the test. God gave me opportunity to share the gospel with him and my new friend from the DMV, and he told me that his wife was a believer in Christ! So I gave him a copy of one of my Christian books to give to her, as well as our gospel booklet.

It took Kim and me (mostly Kim) 40 hours to correct the bank of 550 test questions along with 3 answers for each question. Two weeks ago I went back to Phnom Penh to give the corrected questions to the Director General, and he invited me to lunch with his team of engineers and officials at Public Works.



His Excellency Chhoun Voun, is to my left.

And so it was that I found myself at a Japanese restaurant in a lively discussion about Buddhism, merit, sin, and Christ with a group of well-informed, competent, and friendly government officials. If these officials represent the future of Cambodian governance, I have great hope. It was an astonishing and encouraging afternoon of making new friends and sharing the gospel. God can do whatever he wants to do whenever he wants to do it!

(Please do not post this story.)

PRAYER & PRAISE

- *About a year ago, we sent Chandan, a deaf neighbor, down to a program that teaches Cambodian sign language and some marketable skills. We've been praying for 20 years for this man's salvation, but have been unable to share the gospel clearly because of obvious communication difficulties. Now we've begun to see God answer our prayers. A missionary to the deaf, Grace, will be visiting Chandan and his wife, Kuntea (also deaf), this next week, to explain the good news. Pray that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes and ears and hearts to the truth, and bring them to faith in Jesus. Pray that God's Spirit would fill Grace and her friend Michelle as they act as Christ's ambassadors to this couple.*
- *Some tribal minority villagers have begun to attend a Bible study of Khmer ladies that Kim helps advise each week. Please pray that these spiritually hungry ladies will grow in their faith, and that they will not be prevented from attending because of the difficulties of travel during rainy season. Pray for Lai as she teaches this class.*
- *September 10-14, JD and 3 tribal leaders will meet 15 tribal pastors from "a closed country to our east" to teach them how to preach the gospel from creation to Christ. Pray for understanding, deep fellowship, and no problems with the authorities.*
- *October 30, JD goes to Myanmar with Nat to teach church planters how to use Matthew to "teach them to obey everything I have commanded." At the same time, Kim goes to Chicago and Greenville for her very important yearly "Grandmothering Ministry."*
- *In August you donated a total of \$4000 to be used for flood relief during this rainiest monsoon in decades. Three hundred families received 33 lb. of rice, canned fish, ramen, and a gospel witness.*