

Mission Update

BGBC

11 April 2010

Cambodian Hope

This monthly mission update will look into the projects of Cambodian Hope Organisation (CHO) for 2010 and give the latest news regarding the Safe Haven project. Let us remember that CHO's scope of action covers a number of areas which you can see on their website www.cambodianhopeorganization.org. These areas are children trafficking awareness, education, healthcare, vocational training, agriculture, water & sanitation, micro loans, a safe haven project and development of church.

During the year, CHO will work towards the completion of the Safe Haven Project (initiated in 2008). CHO purchased 50,000m² of land eight kilometres from Poipet in 2008, on which the construction of more than fifteen purpose-built buildings is envisaged within the next ten years. After erecting buildings, CHO has been involved in finalising the premises so they can be functional.

In the last months, a kitchen and dining hall have been fitted, whilst a team of engineers from Scotland installed a biogas unit on site that will provide energy for cooking. In addition, the school premises have been divided into small offices to be used by the teaching staff and school director.

On 1st October 2009, the Safe Haven School opened for the new school year. There, 46 students have been enrolled at the school and attend classes from grades one to three. CHO also hosts a Safe Haven Transit Shelter where the victims of human trafficking can stay temporarily.

Another objective for 2010 will be to make progress in the Hope Transformation Centre which was bought in 2009 and has just begun. CHO is planning to raise funds to renovate the building in order to make it operational. Then a programme of rehabilitating young girls involved in prostitution and sex trade will be initiated and simultaneously the Church will be relocated to the same building.

Nathalie & Paul

With Smile to Sri Lanka

On the 22nd. March I drove up to Peterborough with Richard Westbrook, Smile International's trips co-ordinator, to meet and brief the team from Coloplast UK who will be going to Sri Lanka with me. (see www.coloplast.co.uk)

Coloplast manufacture medical equipment and their goal is "to make life easier for people with intimate healthcare needs". They employ over 7000 people worldwide and their UK division is sponsoring 10 selected people of varying ages and skills to spend two weeks at the Smile Centre in Hambantota in June. (see www.smileinternational.org) Here they will help with running the Centre, teaching the children, helping widows with their self employment projects, building maintenance and setting up and equipping an internet/computer suite.

Smile is also organising a visit to one of the National Parks whilst the team is there and this will be the first opportunity that most of the children (over 100) will have had to leave the confines of their home town and see more of the amazing wildlife in this fascinating country.

Please pray that this will be a life changing experience particularly for those members of the team that don't yet follow Jesus (only 3 currently attend a church on a regular basis) and for all the preparations for the trip.

Graham Garner

Hospices of Hope

In this edition of Mission News I want to share 2 extracts from letters received from our patients:

"When I arrived at the hospice I felt disappointed, lost and abandoned. In this country chaos, corruption, lies and threats reign. I never dreamed that anywhere one could find warmth, patience, and special medication...but you can at this hospice.

God will watch over and repay those who have created this hospice and those who sustain this hospice materially and with money."

"The spiritual help given by the chaplains, the carol services and the leaflets covering religious themes help us to come closer to God and look at death without fear, to be ready for our departure from this life. We don't have the material means to repay you but we have in our breast a heart that beats and wants to thank you all who have contributed to the relief of our sufferings and troubles. God will repay you for all you do to help us."

Update just in ... we are concerned that the House of Insurance at a swoop reduced their contribution to our drug bill from £100,000 per annum to £13,000 but we also rejoice and thank God that several very significant donations have been made which makes the vision of a hospice in Bucharest a much greater reality.

Why not join Ian and me and see this work for yourself?

Carole Ford

News from Thailand

After spending some time with the FBR (Free Burma Rangers) who work with the Karen people who are suppressed in their own country, we took a night bus to Mai Sot, a city in Thailand on the western border, right next to Burma. We were then driven two hours north to a border refugee camp and stayed at an academy called Noh Bo for 9 days, teaching English, hanging out with the kids and going to church with them. They go to church at 6:30am and 5pm every day and three times on a Sunday, the students even led the worship and services which was pretty awesome. It was so cool to see how happy they all were in whatever circumstances they were in because they knew God was with them. This academy is just across the river which separates Burma from Thailand. The threat of being attacked is still very real even if they are in Thailand. While we were there a Burmese soldier came across the river at night and shot someone in the village which is only a 5 minute walk away.

Back in Bangkok we had to start planning for a weekend away with the youth from Christ Church; they wanted us to lead it with games and some Bible studies. The Bible studies were awesome to go through, especially since quite a few of the kids weren't Christians; they were either Buddhists or non Christians.

We have started to visit the prisons in Bangkok. We have visited 3 so far including the infamous Bangkok Hilton. We visited foreigners who are Christians and get no visits from family or no visit's whatsoever. Just to listen to them talk about their amazing work with God in prison with other inmates was probably more encouraging to me than it was for me to visit them. Most of them see just how God works in all situations for good, but I still feel so bad for them as they live in such poor conditions for ridiculous sentences.

Next up is going down south for some more childcare programs.

Prayer points:

- The team to keep in good spirit and health
- The protesting in Bangkok will calm down and no violence will come from it
- Serena, who took us to Noh Bo and showed us everything there. Noh Bo only really gets teaching from foreigners who volunteer and Serena has volunteered for one year, so pray for her safety and her work with God.
- The prep that needs to happen for the childcare down south.
- The Burmese army to stop hunting down the Karen people, and war and suppression to stop.
- The stations of the cross at Bangkok Christ Church to have an effect on people who come in to take some time to look around and reflect on what Jesus has done for us.

Stefan Darque

Oak Hall, Belgrade

At the Oak Hall Bible School, the second term has finished and the new term will begin shortly. In the meantime, the building is being used as a conference centre for a number of different Christian organizations. For example, from 6th to 10th April, for the first time there will be a retreat for the families of those affected by disability (around 80 people). Project Timothy will be organizing a course on preaching that will be open for anyone who wishes to attend, whether they be pastors, preachers or church members who wish to explore this gift.

The Bible School is the only one of its kind in Serbia – please pray that they will be able to make the most of the opportunities that God has given them.

In June, the Oak Hall coach will be taking a group to visit the Bible School in Serbia, as well as the former graduates who are serving God in Bosnia and Croatia. In order to enable as many as possible to see this mission work for themselves the cost for the trip is just £198! See www.oakhall.co.uk for more details.

Tim Lane

Off to Haiti

Three weeks ago we had Art Collins speak on Servanthood. He made a couple of points that totally hit me, and have made a difference to how I view myself as a person and a Christian. One was that you don't have to be perfect to have integrity – you just have to be the best that you can. I dislike fakeness in myself and others so much, and especially spiritual fakeness, that it can become a daily battle against judging myself or others when I lose focus in worship or I think that some girl on base is scantily dressed. The release not to have to be perfectly focussed or always prayerful is immense.

I leave for Haiti in a week (1 April) and I feel less prepared for it than when I arrived in LA. This week we're on outreach prep, and today we went out on a scavenger hunt across LA in our teams. Please pray for bonding in our group as none of my close friends are on it and some really random people are. Also I came out in heat rash just from the Californian sun in March, so how I will cope with the Caribbean sun in May I just don't know. I'm feeling a lot like Caspian at the end of the book when Aslan asks him if he feels ready to rule a country, and he says "I don't think I do, sir. I'm only a kid." I know that the adrenaline will kick in and that I will be forced to bond with eight random Americans and that God can change my heart towards heat and humidity, but I just don't feel it right now. I do know that I am called to Haiti, and I know that God is working in this disaster and that it really will be the transforming part of this Transformations DTS. We'll have limited, if any, contact with home when we're there, so this might be it until I get back to LA in June, but I'll drop a line if I possibly can.

With love, Amy Plender

P.S. Last week I was baptised on Zuma beach in Malibu, which, it turns out, is just like East Sussex but with a few more palm trees. It was impromptu, beautiful, peaceful, exciting and freeing, and absolutely the best thing for me.