

May 2020

# Called to Cambodia

Stories of the adventures of Jeff Henneforth as he responds to God's call to live among, serve, and love the people of Cambodia.



## Covid and Cambodia

Greetings from Cambodia. The less formal more common greeting in the Cambodian language is "Soksubai de?" (pronounced like the following four English words: *soak-sub-bye-day*). It translates as "Are you happy and healthy?" or as we might say more commonly in America, "How are you?" And it is my hope that during these interesting times you are happy and healthy.

When the Coronavirus pandemic really started becoming a serious issue, I was concerned for the people of Cambodia. If it struck here in a significant way, most people would not have access to much of the medical help available in more developed countries. I've been praying for God's mercy on the people here. And God has been very gracious. So far, only 122 cases have been reported here. And of those cases, 119 have recovered, and three are still being treated. There have been no deaths that we know of from the virus. Much of the population falls into low risk categories and I've heard that many of the reported cases have been foreigners. And no new cases have been reported in over three weeks. I've heard there is a possibility that heat, sun and maybe humidity are good at fending off the virus. If so, we are in the right spot and it is the hot season here.



This road is next to the Cambodia -Thai border. Before the virus, there would be hundreds of people here.



Churches closed, but the volleyball court across the street is busy.

Just like everywhere else, the people here are trying to be cautious for the most part. The schools are shut down, as well as churches, casinos, gyms, and some other businesses. One place that is open, and it's really funny to me, is the volley-ball court across the street from the church. It's a place where people go to play and gamble on the games. Right now, it's busier than ever! Over the last two weeks, there have been several days where there must have been over a hundred people gathered there. The border is open but citizens from several countries with high cases of the virus are not being permitted to enter, including those from the US. God really blessed me because I had the opportunity to visit my family in the US over Christmas this year and was able to return and get a one year visa extension before things started to close. Thankfully, people from the more affected countries who are already in the country have not been required to leave.



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Life here is a little slower than usual, but does not seem to be quite as impacted as many of the places I see on the news. Many people, but not everyone, wear masks. Some stores will not permit people to enter if they aren't wearing a mask and they also need to be given a quick temperature scan with a little device held about an inch away from the forehead. Some stores will spray a little isopropyl alcohol into your hands as you enter. I don't sense that people are paranoid. I go to the market every other day to buy some meat or vegetables and it's business as usual there. The government did shut down the highways during the Cambodian new year, which was in the middle of April. That was to limit a usually heavy travel time to prevent the spread of the virus. Usually during the new year celebration, everyone travels to their hometowns and it gets very noisy with lots of people gathering in the streets to throw water at each other, blast loud music, dance and drink a lot of beer. But this year was very quiet since the government directed everyone to stay at home – actually it was kind of nice.



Like many other churches around the world, we have started having our church meetings online. It's been a good experience for us although we're still learning a lot about how to do it better. Before the virus, we would usually have between 20 to 40 people coming on a Sunday morning. Now Facebook shows that we are getting several hundred engagements and over a thousand reaches.



I'm not completely sure what that means, but I'm glad we're connecting with so many. I know that most of the people from the church are watching, and I'm seeing comments, likes and shares from quite a few people around the country. Thanks to the generosity of Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills last year we were able to hook-up a back-up generator. The power has gone out during two different Sunday services since we switched to the online format, but between the generator and an uninterrupted power supply (a battery) hooked up to the computer and internet, the online broadcasts have not been stopped. Also, while I was visiting the US, my cell phone started to die and some friends from church blessed me with a new iPhone, and the timing was perfect as we are now using it to film the services. If you happen to watch one of the services on Facebook, you'll see us leading the service from my upstairs living room instead of our normal meeting room. We're doing that because the audio quality is a lot better in the smaller room, especially if we need to run the generator or if it rains which can get really loud. So far, nobody from the church has gotten sick and all our people are in the lowest risk groups. One of the higher risk groups I've heard about are people who are overweight, which is a group I would have been in a couple of years ago. But thankfully, and with the Lord's help I believe, I have managed to lose over a hundred pounds over the last two years and I'm feeling great. Thank You, Lord!

## Prayer Requests

- I'm so thankful the virus hasn't hit Cambodia very hard. Please pray for God's continued mercy on Cambodia during this time.
- Many people in Cambodia don't use computers, but do use Facebook on their phones. Being able to live-stream the services on Facebook is opening the door to new opportunities to reach people. Please pray that more people to hear about Jesus as the messages from many churches are now online. And also pray for the local pastors here who are trying to use this technology. Pray that they (and I) would preach boldly and with love.
- Please pray for wisdom for new ministry opportunities here in this changing environment.
- And finally, I am so thankful to have been able to lose a lot of weight. Please pray that I would stay consistent with healthy eating habits and exercise so that I will keep the weight off

### Financial Support: [donations are tax deductible]

Missionary financial support for Jeff can be made as a one-time contribution or as monthly support.

Please make checks payable to: Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills with "Cambodia-Henneforth" in the memo.

Mail to: Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills, 24481 Moulton Parkway, Aliso Viejo, CA 92637

If you have any questions about making a donation, please call (949) 362-7475