

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



An Interesting Journey and an Important Meeting

At the end of January, I went with Chomno and a couple of the guys from CHO to Pattaya, Thailand. We were joined by two Cambodian government officials from the social welfare department. The purpose of our trip was to meet with government officials from the city of Pattaya to discuss how to safely return trafficked children brought into Thailand from Cambodia.



Our first night, we had dinner with a couple of the leaders of some local NGO's (non-government organizations) who work with at-risk children in Pattaya as well as a Thai police woman who also works with these children. After dinner, they took us on a tour of the city. Pattaya is a beach city and a lot of tourists are attracted to the boardwalk. Currently, the highest numbers of tourists are from Russia, which has a direct flight to the airport near Pattaya. Many of the signs are in Russian and many of the tourists look like they stepped out of a movie about the Russian mafia. Prostitution was active along the boardwalk, and even though it is officially illegal it seems to be accepted. Both Thailand and Cambodia are very demure societies that do not dress provocatively, so seeing these young girls with barely anything covering them as they plied their wares was

unusual and sad. After the boardwalk, we went for a brief jaunt down Walking Street, which should be called Go-Go Dancer Lane. Neon signs and rows of girls inviting the many by-passers into various bars left little to the imagination. At one point we came across a young Cambodian woman with a little baby who was begging along the street. Our hosts were very surprised to see her because she had just been returned to the border, but apparently had returned immediately. The lure of money obtained by begging was apparently to big a temptation to resist. The evening's journey was an eye-opening prelude for the meeting we would have the next day.

The next morning, we made our way to city hall where the meeting was to take place. I hadn't been sure what to expect, and it turned out to be much bigger than I'd imagined. I had pictured a meeting in a small conference room with maybe a total of 15 people. Instead, we were led to the main council room, where there ended up being about 50 participants. In addition to our Cambodian delegation were official representatives from the city of Pattaya, including the deputy mayor, several police officials, representatives from many NGO's, and even a UN representative. Our delegation was given prominent seating.

During the course of the meeting, many introductions and presentations were made. The focus was on the children and the challenges being faced. The most common challenges faced involve identification. Children often do not know where they are from and often are unwilling to cooperate. This may be due to language barriers or perhaps just fear: both fear of the officials and fear of their handlers. Children come from a variety of countries including Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar (Burma). Sometimes children come with parents who enter illegally, while many others are trafficked in for the purposes of begging, labor, and the sex-trade. Begging is lucrative in the tourists areas, as is labor. Labor can take many forms. One case we heard about involved three children between the ages of four to six years old. They would be sent out on the streets selling gum and cheap bracelets and would be kept out as late as 2 a.m. The children would be taught to cling to tourists and keep asking them to buy things even after being told "no" repeatedly.



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An Important Meeting (continued)

The tactics prove very effective and one child can bring in up to 5000 baht per day (about \$165 US). This is a huge amount of money when you consider that many Cambodians only make the equivalent of \$1-2 per day. Of course, the children don't get to keep the money – it all goes back to the handlers. The children in this particular case study did not want to work, remember they were only 4-6 years old, and when they refused to go out again they were beaten by their handlers. These children were rescued and we saw pictures of the children with large bruises on their faces, arms and backs. Their handler was caught and arrested and is now in jail. Like the children, he was also from Cambodia. Although this particular case ended with a rescue, many are not so fortunate. Children are often passed from one handler to another after a few days or a week and moved to a new location. This makes locating any particular child very difficult. This also makes it difficult to know how many children are being trafficked at any one time. Handlers are usually referred to only as Mr. A and Mr. B rather than using real names. Using this method, the handlers are also able to remain difficult to identify and prosecute. Another challenge is repatriation and reintegration. This has been a particular challenge for the Thai because many children that are returned to the border often end up being found again back in Thailand. So far, there have not been very good means of reintegrating returned children back into their home societies. This is often because even they are returned to their home country, they haven't been truly returned home. These children are often young and uneducated and do not know exactly where they are from. In some cases, they have actually been rented to the handlers by their own parents. Parents are paid money and given an impression of what their children will be doing across the border. However, what the parents are led



to believe is usually misleading and their children end up being treated far worse than expected. With nowhere else to go, many children end up back in Thailand and understandably this is frustrating for the Thai.

All too quickly it seemed the meeting was over. Although many challenges were discussed there was little time to actually begin addressing potential solutions. As a first meeting, however, much was accomplished. Many important contacts were made and a strong desire to work together to address the problems was expressed. Plans are in the works to meet again on an ongoing basis with the next meeting in Cambodia to continue the work and begin developing strategies to combat these problems. Having the meeting in Cambodia will be helpful because a number of Cambodian officials need to be involved who were not able to attend

because they did not have passports. Particularly important for these discussions are the Cambodian border police. Following the meeting, we were invited to a lunch hosted by the city and then visited several rescue homes where children would be initially placed in the Pattaya area.

CHO will play an important role in the reintegration and repatriation process for these children. Plans are to have the most at-risk returnees housed at Safe Haven while families are located or until other safe living arrangements can be made. While many children will be provided transitional housing, in more extreme cases, children may also receive longer term care at Safe Haven as well. There is much to do, but we are glad that a new spirit of cooperation and new opportunities to bring these children back home safely are being developed.



Please pray for these children and for those seeking to help them

Areas of Need

I am so glad to be here and it wouldn't be possible without the support I receive from you. Both your prayers and your giving enables me to be here. While my monthly needs are being met, some additional needs have arisen to further ministry opportunities here. If the Lord leads you and you'd like to contribute, here are some areas where needs exist.

Bible School Dormitory Facility – Three main costs are involved with bringing village pastors in for Bible training: transportation, food and housing. A dormitory facility will provide an excellent alternative to local hotels and reduce costs tremendously for the Bible school students. The facility will cost about \$53,000 US for labor, materials, and furniture and at present about ¾ths of that money is still needed. Every bit helps. For example, a single brick runs about 10 cents, so \$1 covers the cost of 10 bricks and \$10 covers about 100; a window runs about \$60 and a door can be bought for about \$100; \$250 should pay for wiring and \$500 will take care of the plumbing.

Ministry Vehicle – While my moto (motorbike) gets me around town just fine, I'm hoping to purchase a ministry vehicle in the near future. More specifically, I'd like to get a truck that would be mainly used for 1) taking the church planting team (about 4 of us) to visit church clusters and provide training and discipleship for pastors and church leaders many of which are too far away to travel to by moto; and 2) to help transport volunteer teams to different locations. Though I would be the one in possession of the vehicle, my intention is that CHO would own it so that if anything ever happens the truck could continue to be used by CHO for ministry. Projected costs for this are between \$25,000 and \$30,000 US.

Monthly Pastor Support – Once the school begins the students will need support to provide for their food and transportation and a small stipend to help cover the costs of missed work. Most of the students are pastors from villages along the border, and must maintain regular work to support themselves and their families. Many are rice farmers and some are school teachers. Most only make \$1-2 per day and do not have the means to cover the cost of transportation and food. The school will initially provide a Bible-based education for first class of about 40 students. Support will be needed at about \$50 per student per month.

Prayer Requests

I have a couple of requests this month I'd like to provide a little more detail on:

•**New Translator/Bible School Leader** - Prum Mao has been one of my main partners at CHO. In addition to translating, Mao has had a great heart to both learn and teach. We had planned to have him take on a major leadership role at the Bible school. Recently, Mao's mother who had been providing care for his two children while he and his wife worked came down with tuberculosis. She owns a home in Battambang (about 2 hours away from Poipet) and does not want to leave it. As her only child, Mao and his wife made the difficult decision to move in with his mother to care for both her and their children. Unfortunately, because of the distance, this means they've had to resign from CHO. We are now looking for someone who will be able to take Mao's place as both a translator and leader within the school. Please pray that the Lord would lead the right person to this role.

•**Teaching Opportunities** – I am now teaching 2-3 devotionals per week and every Friday afternoon for the CHO staff, giving the Sunday message every other week at the CHO church, and twice a month with some Christian Cambodian teachers. We're also looking to begin going out to the villages to train church clusters (groups of leaders from 5-7 village churches). I've really sensed a lot of people praying for my teaching. I have really loved teaching here and the response I'm getting has been tremendous. I know it's the Lord, and would ask that you would continue to pray. Please include in your prayers that the people would be Doers of the Word and not Hearers only.

•**Border Situation** – Many of you may have seen in the news that the fighting along the Thai border has started again. The fighting is a couple hours away from Poipet, and all has been safe here. Please pray that peace would come to this land and that the authorities would be able to work things out. We'd also like God's wisdom in case things change for the worse.

Language Studies
Health

Relationships

Cultural Adjustment
Time with God

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: 24481 Moulton Parkway, Aliso Viejo, CA 92637
If you have any questions about making a donation, please call (949) 362-7475