



Dry Season Sunset towards Mount Tbeng

Joel Stewart
World Team Cambodia Field
Preah Vihear, Cambodia
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NEWS FROM PREAH VIHEAR

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Streams in the Desert



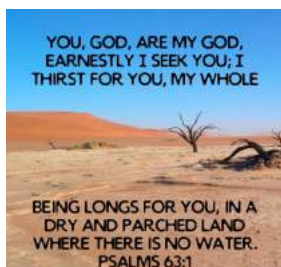
Joel & New Believer Family

The Secret Place, Koak Rumdeng, Preah Vihear — "For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland." - Isaiah 43:19

Dear Prayer Partners,

"It's so hot..." We've all heard the pithy sayings about how hot it is. If you have lived in Houston or Miami or near the equator you know what heat is. It is the beginning of the hot, dry season here in Southeast Asia. While Singapore is getting rain, the last drop we saw was in early November. The fields are crusty, the grass crunches under your feet and dust devils whip up clouds of dust and sun-dried vegetation. Today it was 107 F (41.6 C). I'm not saying it was hot, but I saw two hobbits throw a ring into my yard.

While it is very different from Spring in Illinois where I grew up, there are signs of the promise of something different. Perhaps because the dry, hot season is so extreme, the differences are blaringly stark. Scattered clouds (if you can tell the difference between clouds and the smoke from thousands of fields burning) begin to appear and there is a change in the wind. Trees are budding. Amaryl-lis shoots are beginning to push through the scorched soil as they instinctively sense a new season coming. Yes, we expect the former rains soon. Creation knows well before we do and prepares for a new season which will wash the dust away and begin a season of rebirth in nature. And then it happens—the first rain! I am still waiting.



Sometimes we can't seem to see the promised times of refreshing while we are stuck in the desert times of our lives. God's Word is full of times of waiting for the promise to be realized. Even the world we live in can seem to be an unforgiving desert at times, with no respite from the scorching news of wars, cultural shift, ungodliness and apathy or even rebellion towards God. If we are not careful, we can fall into hopelessness. Paul E. Miller, in his book "A Praying Life", writes *"The hardest part of being in the desert is that there is no way out. You don't know when it will end. There is no relief in sight."*

However, we keep our eyes on the horizon, and seek Him early and earnestly. We wait, though not idly. We continue to work and witness to those around us of His stubborn, redeeming love. The love that led Jesus to Calvary, where "...for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame..." (Hebrews

12:2). As we sojourn in this broken place, and journey through the desert of our circumstances, whatever they may be, we remember, it may be Friday now, but Sunday is coming. We may still have a long trek through the wilderness of uncertainty, but we know that the Shepherd never leaves us in the Valley of Shadow alone. Spring and the reviving rains must come. In our troubled world, God is not distant or removed. He is still sovereign. "The Lord is in his Holy Temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne." - Psalm 11:4. He will one day renew our souls, as well as the earth. And He is with us (Isaiah 41:10).

Lent is a time of waiting. During this season we contemplate the suffering Christ endured to redeem us, while awaiting the celebration of the Resurrection. There will once again be rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:19). Here in what has been one of the most remote and unreached areas of Cambodia, in the northern province of Preah Vihear, we have seen firsthand how God has opened up streams in what was once a dry and barren spiritual desert. We are seeing small communities of believers form, in areas previously completely unreached. We are seeing many lives transformed by the gospel, which is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16). We are watching as those who have been transformed take the gospel to even more unreached places. Christ is bringing "springs of water welling up to eternal life." in the lives of these believers.

So, grab a cup of your favorite beverage and join us in some stories and news on the next page.

From the Living Fields, *Joel*

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website: <https://www.worldteam.org>

Ministry Update & Prayer Points, March, 2024

Plas Prai (Transformation) Center

- Every Friday night the 10th grade students study **Firm Foundations** and the 11th & 12th grade students learn about biblical values during **Discipleship Meetings**. *Please pray* for the gospel to penetrate and transform lives.
- Each Saturday evening the students at the Plas Prai the students invite their friends and people in the community attend **Family Night** for worship and a message. *Pray* for them to impact the community.
- Every Sunday morning the students travel in carts, by truck, by bicycle or by motorbikes to 7 different villages for **children's ministry**. One of the villages, *Choam Srae*, is 1 hour 40 minutes away by moto. One of these now has a church for new believers, and another has a small group of new believers meeting. These are all home villages of our students who have become believers. *Pray* for safety while traveling.
- On Sunday evenings all the students attend **Community of Changed Hearts (CCH)** church where they help on the worship team, by reading scripture and taking the offering. We praise God for CCH's 20th year of standing as a church in Preah Vihear.

New CP Team and New Believers Meetings — Twice a month or so the **new Church Planting (CP) Team**, headed up by *Sokhoeurn*, travels to several locations to encourage new believers who are parents and relatives of our students. Once in two months all 20+ of the new believers from 6 remote locations are invited to gather as a group for a two day program to help build their faith and equip them to reach their communities. *Pray* for them to stand strong in the face of opposition and sometimes persecution.

- We praise God for a small team from **Lenexa Baptist Church** in Kansas who visited in January with much encouragement.
- Transitions — **Jim and Carolyn Gabriels** are on Home Ministry Assignment from mid February to early October. They are excited to be preparing for their daughter Meghan's wedding in May in Pennsylvania. **Chelsea Cooper** has transitioned back to the US after blessing us with almost 2 years in Preah Vihear. *Please pray* for these transitions and that God would guide and bless. **Sina** and I are holding down the fort!
- **Pray** for our partnership with the new **CP Team**, for *Sina* in her new role as Plas Prai director, and for renewing our local NGO for Plas Prai.
- *Please pray* for the students at the **Plas Prai**, as their mid-term exams start March 18th.



PV Team 2023



Inductive Bible Study Training January 2024



A student at Inductive Bible Study training



Students learning new skills



Sokhoeurn teaches Inductive Study methods



Two of our students



Firm Foundations study Grade 10



Daneth and new believer



Little Daliya



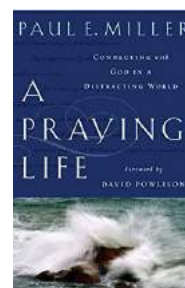
Samphors and Daneth heading out



The new Church Planting team Feb 2024



Saphoeur's mother studying at home church



This book by Paul E. Miller will challenge you in your prayer life. Check it out!

