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A bilingual Khmer-English Theological Journal to give biblical knowledge to its readers as a honeycomb gives strength to exhausted travelers.

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บณึกิิกิก Russell H. Bowers, Jr.



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## Bamboo

## UON Seila

In Asian countries bamboo is a very useful plant, second in utility only to the palm tree. Some Cambodian farmers call bamboo and palm husband and wife-they need one another to produce sugar. Farmers use the bamboo as a ladder to climb the palm tree, and use it as a container to collect juice from the palm.

The bamboo is useful from root to leaves. People cook its shoots as a special food. They use it to build houses, huts, thatched roofs, baskets, fishing rods and equipment, sleeping beds, water containers (for tribal people), chopsticks, toothpicks, etc.

On top of that bamboo is used to symbolize the young generation. An old Cambodian saying states, Tom paing snong reusey-"Bamboo shoots take the place of the old bamboo." "Bamboo Shoot" is the name of a World Vision project that works with street children near Psar Thmey.

The Vietnamese use the bamboo as a symbol to teach their school students. In China bamboo is very popular. Because they use it to make chopsticks, they bite on it every day during their meals! Their artists often portray the plant in all kinds of paintings. Chinese Christians have used bamboo as a symbol for their faith in the film, Bamboo in the Winter.

As a Cambodian Christian I want to use the bamboo to introduce to you some of our Christian principles. In doing so I am trying to follow in our Master's footsteps. To the Jews our Lord Jesus quoted from the Mosaic Law, to fishermen He talked about catching men, to farmers He spoke a parable about seeds, to an intellectual like Nicodemus He employed a philosophical approach, and to the woman at the well He used a simple object with which she was already familiar. That is what I will do. Because you are all familiar with the bamboo, I will use it to tell you (I dare not use the word "teach" you) how to deliver God's message in an appropriate and culturally acceptable manner.

Don't try to exactly copy Western teachers or missionaries. Their approach might work in their context, but not so well in ours. When I say this I don't mean to water down the gospel or weaken the message of God. Look at our Lord Jesus-while He was on earth He used different approaches for different audiences. "Be strong with the Gospel. Be understandable to people."

I know Cambodians like poems, so I will give you one to read:

## Shoots Take the Place of the Old Bamboo

An old adage affirms what I say, so please listen carefully.
It says that young shoots take the place of the old bamboo.
This is something youth should know.
Old bamboo is eventually cut, and some dies away.
So you must strengthen yourselves.
You must try hard to grow up.
Some bamboo has fallen down.
Some has been blown up into the air by strong, swirling winds.
Some has been burned by fire because it has blossomed.
Please hear this, both men and women!
If the bamboo blossoms, it can no longer be used by the farmer.
He must cut it down and destroy it.
Bamboo that has blossomed is useless-it is fit only for the flames.
This kind of bamboo can be compared to some Christians.

A handful of them have grown narrow minded.
They minister only so that they may puff themselves up.
This kind of bamboo resembles the proud who want their names to be famous.
They seek personal profit, lofty status, excessive property.
This kind of desire is a snare set by Satan;
It leads people to quarrel among themselves.
Because of overweening pride friend betrays friend.
They dare to act fearlessly, for they seek to feed their greed.
The result is great disunity.
The book of Timothy says that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil
Such as pride ... quarreling ... and wickedness in the heart.
Children don't obey their parents and their hearts are filled with dishonesty.
Youth are like bamboo shoots growing up continuously.
May you become good bamboo of the highest quality!
I tell you that good bamboo is united closely with each other And loves each another and cares for its young.
They carefully protect their shoots from being cut away.
Bamboo grows in tight clusters to protect their young from being cut.

Normally bamboo can stand firmly despite rain and storm Because it grows closely united together.
Therefore it stands unbroken by the storm.
We must learn from the example of the bamboo.
When the winds howl loud the bamboo bows down nearly to the ground.
They do not try to stand proud at all.
They rise to stand tall only when the storm passes.
They do not disparage their nature, as if bowing down were weak!
This sets a good example for us.

Another example-one I want to warn you against-is this:
Do not imitate those bamboo who unite with their enemies.
Once someone came to cut some bamboo.
But before he could cut even one his hand was bleeding.
He hacked away, growing breathless and tired.
He glanced at his knife and saw that it had been nicked.
His blade used to be shiny, but now one part was no longer there.
He felt sorry for his knife.
Along came another man, his axe in his hand.
He was so happy, and began to chop the bamboo.
He slashed away at the branches, but soon his hand too was bleeding.

The old bamboo said, "I was not worried at all About the cutting these two men did.
But I was extremely concerned about a third man.
He held a short blade,
But it was fixed to a long handle,
Because one of our own Family was attached to his blade.
This cutting tool was very dangerous for us.
This kind of enemy can destroy us easily
Because the long handle--one of our own!-can help the blade Reach through our defenses and strike us at the root."
This bamboo, by uniting with the enemy, helps destroy his own folk.
This provides a warning for $u s$. Don't follow that example!
When we are united, we are strong.
When we are divided, we are weak.
Please remember this, or there will be great remorse.
O Youth! You are the new bamboo!
Remember that!
Don't forget God's commandments!
We must love one another.
If we love one another we can truly be called
God's children-children of the Lord of lords and King of kings.

## Positive Lessons from the Bamboo

When a storm blows hard the bamboo bows down very low. After the storm passes, it stands up again as normal. We need to be humble like the bamboo. We Christians need that same kind of behavior. The worst $\sin$ Satan committed was pride; therefore we must totally avoid that pattern. On the other hand, the Bible tells us that Jesus "humbled himself and became obedient to death." Because He humbled Himself in that way "God exalted him to the highest place." Like the bamboo, Jesus bowed down, and was able to stand up tall again. Christians need to follow the example of Jesus (and the bamboo), not the example of Satan.

Bamboo plants are united closely with each other. That often makes it hard to chop down an individual bamboo plant. If they all grew far apart it would be much easier to destroy them. The same is true with Christians. If we would stand close to one another, support one another, and hold one another up, it would be more difficult for our enemy Satan to chop us down.

## Negative Lessons from the Bamboo

Bamboo is most useful before it blossoms. If it does blossom it will bear fruit and become useless. Normal bamboo is flexible and tough. You can bend it easily to make baskets and other items without breaking. But after it blossoms the bamboo turns brittle and fragile. You cannot use it. Further, it will produce spores that will affect neighboring stands of bamboo. So when bamboo blossoms, it must be cut down and burned.

Blossoming is like pride. Pride is a sin that God strongly hates. When we grow proud, the ministry that God has given us will not prosper at all. Pride never produced wisdom, but our natural tendencies urge us to be proud, don't they?

God hates pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Most quarrels stem from pride, but wisdom is found in those who

[^2]take advice. ${ }^{2}$.As Christians we must hate pride and get rid of it, or else we will become caught up in quarrels and become foolish. We may refuse to take advice. Proverbs $16: 18-19$ reads, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud." Proverbs 29:23 says, "A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor." Isaiah 25:11 warns, "They will spread out their hands in it, as a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim. God will bring down their pride despite the cleverness of their hands."

This is similar to the farmer who sees the bamboo starting to blossom. He quickly cuts it down and burns it. Bamboo is not supposed to blossom. It cannot do the same as roses or other flowers that people give to singers and officials on their arrival at the airport. When bamboo blossoms it means that it has pride.

As Christians, we must know that pride leads to destruction or quarrelsomeness. So we must avoid such attitudes and behavior in our daily lives, and walk with God humbly. Amen!

## Conclusion

- To be useful for the farmer, bamboo must not blossom and try to be like other flower plants.
- To be useful in society Christian must not puff themselves up or try to be famous.
- When the bamboo blossoms it is useless. It has to be destroyed.
- When Christians grow proud God will not use or exalt them. They will be laid low.
- When pride exists there will be disunity among us!



# How Can the Church Prevent the Breakdown of the Fragmenting Cambodian Family? 

Glenn MILES

## What is a family?

The Cambodian view of the family differs from that of typical Western conservative Protestants. The latter have regarded the "nuclear" family-typically with three or four members-as the traditional model. But this view owes more to European culture than to the Bible, and is far from what is "normal" in most cultures, including Cambodia.

In Bible times Hebrew families were grouped together in houses. An interdependent Hebrew household was made up of between fifty and one hundred people. These were in turn united through marriage, kinship, and adoption to form clans. Several clans constituted a tribe, and the confederation of tribes made up Israel. According to this model, the family was not just a social unit but also an economic and political one. Marriages were arranged and a "bride price" paid to seal the covenant." Whole households, including children, worked together on the land. This pattern has much in common with the extended families found in rural Cambodia today.

[^3]In this context marriage is usually arranged, and a covenant is made not just between individuals, but also between families. Where parents are loving and concerned for their children's welfare, arranged marriages can result in a successful union of dynasties. They are also a strong reminder that two families are being brought together, not just two individuals. This can strengthen the bonds within the community, and economic ties further reinforce the relationship.

## What causes family breakdown in Cambodia?

Problems may arise within this model if parents of a bride and groom make decisions for their children without any regard for their opinions or needs, such as choosing a partner on purely financial grounds. Another unhealthy model in Cambodia is the dominant patriarchal marriage, in which men become abusive towards their wives and children, and rarely if ever consult them in decisions that affect them. Domestic violence is common in Cambodia.

Political ideologies, too, sometimes wage war against the family unit. For example, during the Pol Pot era the family rice pot was broken as a symbol that the new regime would do away with the need for the family. Everything was supposed to be provided by the Angkar (the new regime), which even arranged marriages. Children were expected to speak out against their parents if they were going "against the Angkar." Many children became the soldiers who enforced the rules; such a role reversal violated the traditions of respect for the elders.

Cambodian culture still contains many fatalistic attitudes. Men still blame their wives if the family is poor, and feel that this can justify their desertion.

In a society where people's belief structures-in Cambodia's case Buddhism, animism, and communism-have been challenged and left a vacuum, people may turn to materialism as the answer. Money becomes a god. "If only I had enough money everything would be OK," people think. So in some "middle-class" families both parents work long and late; and see very little of their families or each other. Relationships become frail and break down.

## What is God's concern for families in Cambodian society?

What would God have us promote or discourage, protect or challenge, in the area of family life? Scripture does not always present a rosy picture of the family. We read of fratricide, rape, incest, adultery, and murder-as well as love and loyalty-both within households and beyond them.

Nevertheless, the "family" can be a relationship and an institution in which God's grace is experienced and where people can find nurture and healing. It is a place where they can grow as persons in their individuality, in their social relations, and in their relationship with God. ${ }^{2}$ However, like any special relationship and institution, "the family" can become perverted by sin, with people being disloyal, competing for power, and neglecting responsibilities. Sadly, some churches have at times misinterpreted Scripture in an attempt to justify such wrong behavior.

As mentioned earlier, the Old Testament gives us the model of the extended family. This was not just a social but also an economic and political unit. In the New Testament we see marriage as a covenant relationship, characterized by mutual submission, respect, and service. Thomas Aquinas ${ }^{3}$ described how children are made in part in the image of their parents, and therefore naturally belong to and are valued by them. But they are also made in the image of God, and belong to and are valued by Him. He compares Christ's sacrificial love for his church in Ephesians 5 to a father's love, in order to reinforce the long-term commitment of fathers and husbands to their children and wives.

Yet the family in the New Testament is seen not just in terms of kinship and marriage, but also as the community of believers. Paul describes the church as a family. The New Testament church met in households, where fellow believers were to be welcomed like relatives. Those baptized, according to Paul,

[^4]have been adopted by God. ${ }^{4}$ Their siblings are other Christians. Their inheritance is the community of believers. ${ }^{5}$

In a culture where the family was more important than all other relationships, the New Testament church was to reach out to the Gentiles, to the unlovely, and even to enemies. Clapp suggests, "Paradoxically, a family is enriched when it is de-centred." ${ }^{\text {" }}$ The Christian family is therefore not a safe haven from the world, but rather a powerful witness to the world. Even vulnerable families need to learn the responsibility and joy of reaching out in hospitality, rather than fearfully withdrawing into a "bunker" type of self-preservation mentality, which has been so common in the Cambodian environment of thirty years of war.

Jesus himself reinforced the importance of the community of believers on various occasions. He emphasized his relationship with his heavenly Father over his parents, ${ }^{7}$ and he described the disciples as his "mother and brothers" over his own family. ${ }^{8}$ Later he says that those who love father or mother more than they love him are not worthy of him. ${ }^{9}$

This is not to denigrate the family. In a country where the father of many children is absent because of Pol Pot, civil war, abandonment, HIV/AIDS, or simply excessive work demands, we need to encourage men to take their responsibility for their wives and children seriously. God sent angels to ensure that Joseph took his responsibility in fathering Jesus seriously and did not abandon Mary as he might have done. God went to some trouble to make sure there was no risk of the breakdown of the marriage of Joseph and Mary, thus ensuring that there were two parents.

[^5]
## How can the church support the family?

Parenting in Scripture occurs in the context of marriage. This does not mean that in ministry we ignore those who are parenting outside a marriage, but it does mean that we value the relationship between parenting and marriage within the church. The church also needs to find ways to stop men from drifting away from families and parenthood. Cambodian men need to understand that if their families are poor it is not their wives' fault. There is no room for fatalism in the church, and the church needs to challenge such assumptions. Cambodian men also must understand the importance of faithfulness to their wives and families, and avoid promiscuity.

Supporting parents is vital. There needs to be encouragement of parental responsibilities towards children and the development of a caring community around them. "God himself trusted His own Son to humankind as a vulnerable child, requiring that Son to be nurtured by a frail but able family and community, symbolically provid[ing] a model of trust and responsibility. . . ." ${ }^{10}$

In the Old Testament, although children were entirely subject to the authority of the head of the household and counted legally as his property, "there was much greater concern with the responsibility of the father for his children than with his rights over them."11 The shema, the Hebrew confession of faith, was to be impressed on children "when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Parental responsibility to teach children the truth about God and godly living was vital. In Proverbs 6:20 children are encouraged to keep their father's commands and not to forsake their mother's teaching. Proverbs 22:6 talks about the responsibility of parents to create a

[^6]desire for spiritual things in children from a young age. ${ }^{12}$ Men in the church can and should provide role models for children.

In the early church children were encouraged to obey their parents. There is no surprise about this. It reflects one of the Ten Commandments Moses received. However, parents were then encouraged to "bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord," and fathers were encouraged not to "exasperate your children, lest they lose heart." ${ }^{13}$ Since Paul's letters were to be read aloud to the whole churches to which they were sent, the fact that he addressed parents and children in them is significant. First, he assumes that children belong to the community of the church and that they would be present when his letters were read. Second, he encourages mutual responsibilities on parents and children. This challenges the common assumption at that time that the parental role carried with it unlimited authority over the children of the family.

Although parenting does require sacrifice, "loving your neighbor as yourself" is key. ${ }^{14}$ "Love as equal regard" provides a balance between modern individualism and the more traditional ethics of extreme duty and self-sacrifice. This understanding of love is especially important for those Cambodian mothers and wives who have "disproportionately carried the burden of enacting self-sacrificial models of Christian love."

While children can most benefit from growing up in a twoparent family, this is not always possible. Both the Old and New Testaments mention responsibility to orphans and the fatherless. Being an orphan in ancient times meant being deprived of support, losing legal standing, and becoming vulnerable to those who would exploit the weak. God is seen as the defender of the fatherless, ${ }^{15}$ and the covenant community is encouraged to practice similar

[^7]compassion. ${ }^{16}$ The same was true of the early church, where a "pure and faultless" religion was exemplified by those who "look after orphans and widows." ${ }^{17}$

The difficulty for the Cambodian church today is that there are many children who do not fit neatly into the two-parent family structure. Children may have been separated from one or both parents through war, disaster, accident, or the ill health of a parent. In the past there have been culturally appropriate ways of absorbing orphans-into the extended family or into a monastery, for example. However some communities-for example those greatly affected by war or those with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS-may feel they cannot cope. In these situations the supportive environment of the church family can provide a model different from that of the surrounding community and explore how it can support orphans

The Cambodian church has many families headed by women. Pastors need to understand how each situation arose; because the issues such families face will vary according to the circumstances. One family may suffer a history of violence and abuse, whereas others may have to deal with widowhood, desertion, or promiscuity. There are no simplistic solutions. The church must first find out what the needs are by gently developing relationships, asking, and then being ready with appropriate support.

Grandparents, aunts, and uncles, where available, can play a supportive role. This should be encouraged. In some cases they are the main providers of care for the child. The influence of peers is also important for children's physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

Cambodian churches need to recognize that the number of orphans is likely to increase due to HIV/AIDS, and must take the issue of orphans seriously. One Takhmao church with a congregation of eighty has taken on the responsibility for seventeen orphans. Various members have opened their homes to children to sleep overnight, and then part of the collection money on Sunday

[^8]goes towards paying for their food. They are taking the Biblical mandate of caring for widows and orphans seriously.

As well as considering what to do with orphans in the community, the church needs to look at how they can prevent children from being orphaned in the first place. In Cambodia this may result from loss of parents by death or abandonment, but children can receive inadequate care for other reasons. Where a marriage is fragile, the church needs to support and strengthen the marriage. In this way it may enable relationships to be restored and prevent family breakdown, violence against women, desertion, and divorce. Similarly where parent-child relationships are strained, support of parents in a loving community may prevent child abuse and inter-generational violence. There may be other ways that the church can temporarily look after children until vulnerable parents can develop greater resilience.

The church in Cambodia can provide a model very different from that of the surrounding community. Ideally, Christian couples are committed to each other and to their children, and are secure enough in God's love that they are willing to reach out to the unlovely and include them as part of their extended family.

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## The Christian and Suffering

Margaret R. STREET

Human suffering is a great mystery. The pain of past distress is evident in the everyday lives of Cambodian people. The legacy of that pain is felt in the bitterness of many who have survived horrendous years of suffering.

Often family groups are gatherings of extended relatives who have survived. Then there is the non-ending cycle of floods and the heavy burden of poverty. All this is made more difficult with the constant fear of HIV infection from an unfaithful partner or past indiscretion. With this is the fear that innocent children will be affected or left as orphans. Those already infected deny the cause and seek endless medical help, thus depleting the family resources. When a cure fails to materialize the family struggles with bitterness, anger, and a need to find purpose and meaning to life.

People from all cultures spend time, energy, and resources to avoid suffering. When it is impossible to eliminate, some decide to end their own lives through suicide, or seek help to remove the suffering person through euthanasia.

## What is the Christian response in such times of hardship and pain?

- Do Christian attitudes to the suffering celebrate the hope of the Christian message?
- Do Christians deny non-believers the knowledge of Christian hope and eternal salvation?
- How can we share the good news in a way that those who so desperately need it can understand?

First-century Christians faced intense persecution and oppression. The Bible does not record their complaints about suffering and pain. But there are accounts of how Christians spent their time supporting those who were suffering. See 1 Pet 4: 1215; 2 Cor 8:1-2; Gal 6:2

## The good life

When we seek the good life, with its material helps to feel healthy, wealthy and successful, we give little thought to understanding the God of creation and His love for those in pain and suffering. But when unemployment, poverty, hardship or debilitating illness comes, we are led to believe we must have done something wrong to deserve such distress.

## How world view influences a person's response to suffering

A person's worldview is largely influenced by his religious beliefs. Animists believe suffering comes from the spirit world of ancestors. They must appease these spirits by. offerings and sacrifices. Hindus believe suffering comes from a bad karma. The sufferer is paying for something wrong done in a previous existence. The Buddhist sees suffering as the result of human desire and attachment to people and things. The goal of each Buddhist is to attain nirvana, a release from suffering, desire and the finite self. In nirvana there is no enduring self but a total awareness in the midst of total being leading to enlightenment. Thus a person escapes from bad karma.

For many people a mixture of these beliefs is evident in their response to suffering. It is a simple matter of cause and effect. Much effort may be made to appease the aggrieved spirits. Others accept a bad karma as the cause and suffer in silence.

## Christian beliefs about suffering

## 1. Suffering came into the world through sin.

God gave the freedom to choose to obey Him or to disobey Him. Suffering came into the world as a result of man's
disobedience to God. Genesis 1-3 records the events. Therefore, all people and all creation suffer. See Rom 8:18-38.

It is true that some suffering is the result of individual lifestyle, but we cannot know enough about other people to make a judgment. We have no right to blame an individual for his or her suffering. See John 9:1-7; Job 1-2.

Most suffering comes from other factors over which we have no control. The record of Satan's conversation with God shows Satan is responsible for some suffering. See 1 Pet 5:8-9; Rev 2:10.

It is also true that involvement in Christian ministry often brings suffering. See 2 Cor 6:4-10; 2 Tim 1:8.
Suffering is part of life. See 1 Pet. 4:12-19.

## 2. God is involved in human suffering.

Isaiah 43:1-7 speaks of suffering and of God's concern and care for those who suffer. God can and will help us in our suffering. We need to acknowledge Him and seek to follow His ways. He suffers for us. See Luke 22:1-71; 23:32-49; Heb 4:14-16.

It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the curse and power of sin has been broken. One day suffering will cease. See Rev 21:1-4; Isa 35:1-10; 53:1-12.

In the meantime, God has given us the privilege of using our suffering for Him. See Phil:1:29.
He uses suffering to refine, mature and discipline us. See Isa 48:9-11; Heb 12:3-13; 1 Pet 1:6-9.

God demonstrates His power and love in the midst of suffering. See 2 Cor 12: 7-10.

## 3. We can respond to suffering in faith.

Our own suffering equips us to help others who suffer. See 2 Cor 3:3-11; Rom 5:1-5.

We can join together with the church, the body of Christ to care for those who suffer either physically or spiritually. See Matt 25:31-46; Luke 10:1-12; 25:1-12, 25-37; 1 Cor 12:26.
4. We endure suffering with patience and hope, trusting in God's compassion and mercy. See James 5:7-11.

Suicide and euthanasia are not acceptable to God. See Ex 20:13; Num 11:15; Job 3:11-13; Jer.20:14-15; Phil.1:19-24.

Suffering remains a mystery that cannot be fully understood or controlled. Read Job, especially chapters 1-2 and 42.

Christians often struggle to accept suffering. Some revert to old family beliefs based on a worldview that fails to trust in God. Young Christians in particular need help to

- understand their suffering from a biblical perspective;
- accept the finished work of Jesus Christ who took the punishment for man's sin;
- put their faith in God;
- rejoice in the Christian Hope of eternal salvation.

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## God and Money <br> Part Two--Debt and Savings

## Neal YOUNGQUIST

We all struggle at times with decisions about money and possessions. Should we buy or not buy? How can I improve my standard of living? Should I leave the comforts of my job for one with a larger salary though I may not be as happy? Should I go into debt to buy a new motorbike or a house? How can I better manage my money and possessions?

These questions and others often weigh on our hearts and minds. Some people are aware of them more than others, yet our response to these thoughts impacts our daily lives. So how should we manage our money and possessions for the glory of God? After all, God has entrusted them-whether little or much-to us as stewards. ${ }^{1}$

This article attempts to provide some guidance in the practical day-to-day matters of correctly managing money. "God and Money, Part One" ${ }^{2}$ addressed our attitudes about money, specifically greed and contentment, as well as teaching on the blessedness of giving. With this as a foundation, Part Two will focus on the contrasting issues of debt and savings.

## Debt-Financial Slavery

Proverbs $22: 7$ states, the borrower is servant to the lender. Debt usually demands the borrower to pay back to the lender within a period of time both the principal (the amount borrowed) and an additional payment for interest (a fee for the use of the money borrowed). If the loan conditions are not met, the borrower is

[^17]placed in an increasingly difficult financial situation that can lead to loss of possessions, family, reputation, and well-being.


Realizing the entangling consequences of borrowing, Paul encouraged the Roman church to keep out of debt and owe no man anything except to love one another. ${ }^{3}$ With this in mind, what should the Christian's attitude be toward debt? In many cultures, borrowing money is an acceptable practice for funding education, purchasing land, a house, a motorbike, or a car. Businesses routinely borrow capital to fund the expansion of operations. So why was Paul so fixed in teaching the church to stay away from debt? Because of the dangers associated in becoming enticed by the attractiveness of "easy money." Remember, it is easy to receive money but often quite difficult to pay it back.

Before entering into debt one should consider the following questions:

- Am I borrowing funds for something I need or something that I want? Placing oneself into debt for nonessential purchases is often a dangerous trap that can lead to dire consequences. Borrowing for investment in an income-producing activity may be appropriate, provided a feasible business plan and strong commitment exists to pay off the loan.

- Am I committed to paying off the debt as soon as possible? Good money management principles strongly encourage obtaining financial freedom from debt entanglements as soon as possible. Do not allow yourself to remain in bondage for a long period of time.
- Are the terms reasonable? Carefully review the interest rate and payment terms before signing a loan contract. Is the interest rate competitive within the marketplace? Are the terms

[^18]generally easy to comply with? Can your monthly income support the payment schedule?

- Can the purchase be postponed until sufficient funds are saved? Our normal feelings often lead us to act quickly, but waiting has sure rewards. Patience and discipline-especially concerning material possessions-are godly attributes that each of us needs to build within our lives.
- Am I prepared to deal with the effects of debt on myself and my family?. The stress of financial obligations can have numerous effects such as marriage discord, loss of sleep, worry, and health problems. In addition, the pressure to pay financial burdens can lead one into ruinous temptations such as stealing, cheating, bribery, etc.
- Do I have the peace of God? If God's leading is not present do not proceed, rather wait on Him for guidance. The almighty Jehovah God who created the heavens and earth may have other methods to meet your needs. He wants us to trust in Him not in earthly financial resources that will eventually pass away. ${ }^{4}$

In summary, the sound advice is to keep our financial obligations to a minimum. . If borrowing is a necessity, understand the consequences and commit to releasing yourself from the weight of debt as quickly as possible. Above all else our desire should be to keep ourselves as free as possible to follow, serve, and obey God according to His will for us. ${ }^{5}$. With this as our goal, an anchor of debt is the last thing we need.


## Savings--Preparing for the Future

Savings is an often overlooked financial principle. But its importance should not be disregarded. As demonstrated in the

[^19]following illustrations, savings can be the difference between life and death.


The Bible notes several examples of saving present resources for future use in time of need. One such example is from God's insect world. The common ant
is well spoken of in Proverbs $30: 24-25$ as exceedingly wise because it gathers and stores food during the warm season for use during the cool season when resources are not as plentiful: ${ }^{6}$ We can learn much from nature if only we will stop and reflect on God's wondrous creation.

Another demonstration of savings wisdom comes from the life of Joseph in Genesis 41. God revealed to Joseph the details of Pharaoh's dream and its interpretation that foretold seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. In response to this prediction of abundance and need, Joseph wisely recommended to Pharaoh a savings plan to adequately prepare for the future. Twenty percent of the crops during the years of plenty were to be saved for use during the years of famine. This storehouse proved to be invaluable as it provided both for Egypt's needs as well as those of the surrounding region-including Joseph's family living in Canaan.

These two examples clearly show the wisdom of savings. As a resource, savings can serve as a bridge to meet insufficiencies during difficult times or for sudden needs that occur without waming. Yet in everything there needs to be a balance. Prosperity can turn our affections away from God and onto our storehouse of riches.

In the parable of the rich fool Jesus warned about the dangers of trusting in wealth. ${ }^{7}$ The rich fool relied on his earthly riches stored in corruptible barns rather than trusting in God and his

[^20]eternal riches. His life was suddenly snatched away without the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of his labor. By keeping riches solely for himself and not sharing it with others in need, the rich fool lost all he had. Saving is a wise practice as long as we continue to maintain our affections on God. Remember Jesus' insight into the lives of human creation-where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ${ }^{8}$

One of the main challenges of practicing saving in Cambodia is the lack of reliable savings vehicles. Several commercial banks in Cambodia offer savings services but require large amounts beyond the ability of most individualsUS $\$ 100$ or more--to open or maintain an account. Yet this should not be a reason to discourage savings, but rather serve as a goal to
 save towards. It is never too late to start a habit of regular savings. No matter how small the amount-even one, two, or five hundred riel every day or week-regular savings will amount to much over several years.

Saving at work is another potential option. In an effort to encourage savings, some employers will deduct a portion of wages to set aside in a savings plan for employees. If such a plan is not available at your workplace, perhaps one can be established. Other creative ideas are possible, including group savings with trusted friends or co-workers.

One key to good financial health is a personal savings program. Whether at home, the workplace, or through a reliable commercial bank, a disciplined savings program yields results. Most important, it is a valuable lifeline during times of emergencies or distress. We do not know for certain what the future holds, but at least we can do our best to prepare for it.
${ }^{8}$ Luke 12:34.































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## The Key to Joy

Russell H. BOWERS, Jr.

Who does not enjoy joy? If offered the choice of joy or grief, delight or disgust, enjoyment or ennui, we automatically opt for the former. The question is not, "Do we want joy?" but rather "How do we find it?"

Joy is often said to be the theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians.' Certainly the vocabulary of this emotion peppers the epistle. ${ }^{2}$ But perhaps a more central theme-and one more helpful to its readers than a general rhapsody on joy-is an explanation of how to find it. What we need is not someone's parading how elated he is, but his explanation of how he got that way and how we can follow. Philippians does that-it shares the key to joy. The key is selflessness.

That selflessness should be the key to joy sounds like folly to many. Standard wisdom advises to look out for Number One; to acquire wealth and title; to make our "self" our god and yield to no one. Joy comes, many would argue, by exalting and pampering ourselves-by selfishness not selflessness. But Philippians teaches the contrary.

[^25]
## Background

Philippians was written to a church founded during Paul's second missionary journey. Even at this early stage of the relations between the apostle and Philippi, the ideas of selflessness and its resulting joy may be discovered. The journey itself was prompted by selfless concern for others-"Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing. ${ }^{13}$ Paul evangelized the city not for his own benefit but because its people called for help. ${ }^{4}$ When the apostles were beaten and imprisoned, rather than lament their own misfortune they sang praise to God, and when freed by the earthquake restrained their jailer from suicide rather than running for personal freedom.' Paul's work in Philippi was rooted in selflessness.

But rather than dwell on the historic account in Acts, this article will consider how this theme develops in the letter itself. We will survey its text under the following headings:

1. Selflessness should be practiced despite adversity, 1:1-30
2. Selflessness is the key to success, 2:1-30
3. Selflessness means looking beyond ourselves, 3:1-11
4. Selflessness means working for the future rather than indulgence in the present, 3:12-4:1
5. Selflessness is expressed in practical ways, 4:2-23

Selflessness Should be Practiced Despite Adversity, 1:1-30
Altruism may be in order when things are going smoothly for us. But when times are hard we need to circle the wagons, forget about others, and look out for ourselves. Or so many would say. But not the Apostle Paul.

He opens the letter by referring to himself as a slave-not exactly a title of overweening self-importance. In verses 3-11 Paul

[^26]shows how he thinks of others before himself. His kind of active, practical concern for others--not passive Buddhist "no-self"-is the true antithesis of selfishness. Paul gives thanks for them (3). He is glad for their partnership in the gospel (4-5). Why? Not because of any benefit he will receive, but because of the credit that will accrue to them (see 4:17). The apostle who has accomplished and suffered much for Christ does not rehearse his own exploits but celebrates what they have done. They occupy a prominent place in his heart $(7-8)$. He prays for their perfection (9-11).

Not only is he concerned more for others than for himself, Paul cares more about the progress of the gospel than his own comfort (12-14). With one small phrase-"what has happened to me"-he dismisses all the hubris and injustice he suffered in Acts 21-28. How contrary to some missionary letters today, which focus on the missionary and the hardships of service far from home! Paul is glad that unbelievers hear the gospel (13); he is glad that believers are emboldened to take on ministry (14), even if it takes his own mistreatment to spark these advances.

Paul would rather that people know Christ than that they know him (15-18a). He cannot tolerate the preaching of a false gospel (see Gal 1:6-9), because skewed content will keep people lost and detract from the glory that should go to Christ. But skewed motives-such as ill-will against himself-concern him less so long as Christ is preached. This is the attitude of a selfless, godly Christian worker, reminiscent of that of John the Baptist. ${ }^{6}$ How much more could be done in Christian ministry if all its ministers rejected the drive to promote themselves and recalled that they were "jars of clay . . . only servants, through whom [others] came to believe." ${ }^{7}$

[^27]Finally, the apostle was willing to forego ease so that others could grow (verses $18 \mathrm{~b}-25$ ). His overriding desire is not for personal gain or comfort, but for Christ's glory (21). He knows that dying would mean gain by releasing him from "this mortal coil" for the glories of heaven. But at the same time he knows that continued ministry on earth would prove more encouraging to younger Christians, and so stands convinced that God will allow him to stay with them. It would mark a major advance in the faith of many Christians were they able to honestly affirm, "I would prefer heaven and Christ to continued life on earth." But Paul has surpassed that stage to the point where he can say, "Though heaven is better for me, my staying here on earth is better for you. Therefore I trust God will keep me here for now."

So in the opening verses of this chapter we hear of Paul's joy and begin to see how this joy sprang from his selflessness. He practiced that selflessness even when times were hard. Then in verses $27-30$ he beckoned his readers to a similar lifestyle.

First he urged them to live selflessly in their character by conducting themselves "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (27). When we fall into greed, lust, or laziness, it is because we are thinking of ourselves, not of Christ, others, or our responsibilities. Second he urged them to live selflessly in their unity by standing firm "in one spirit" and contending "as one man" (27). When we promote division and a party spirit it is because we value our own status above that of Christ or his whole church. Third he urged them to live selflessly in their boldness in the face of suffering. When we cower in the face of opposition or capitulate to it, it is because we are thinking of our own immediate comfort rather than the truth of God. If we will do these three, we will share the apostle's joy as we practice selflessness despite adversity.

## Selflessness is the Key to Success, 2:1-30

Five centuries ago Columbus defied conventional logic and sailed west in an attempt to reach the Far East. Because Columbus's cosmology envisioned a spherical rather than a flat
earth, his plan made sense. Had the Americas not intervened, it would have succeeded.

Counterintuitive visions of reality frequently reward those willing to step back from immediate sensory input to contemplate the larger picture. These more comprehensive visions often end up more truly grasping reality, whether they entail a spherical rather than a flat earth. Einsteinian rather than Newtownian physics, or selflessness rather than selfishness as the key to joy.

Certainly immediate and unreflective perception suggests that the way for any self to achieve success and the joy it brings is for that self to seek without apology or deviation its own recognition, advancement, prosperity, and security. What happens to others is at best of secondary importance. But those willing to step back from immediate and popular perception and envision a more comprehensive view of reality-one that includes biblical input-find the opposite approach truer. The way to succeed is to put others first.

Philippians 2 teaches this truth by first introducing the theme of selflessness (negatively stated) or putting others first (positively stated) in verses 1-4 (particularly 3-4). The middle section of verses 12-18 explicates the theme by urging obedience (rather than self will) and the rejection of complaining (about wrongs committed against the self) and arguing (for one's own way). Paul's own example of joy stemming from his being poured out for others concludes this small section. The remainder of the chapter consists of three counterintuitive paths to success illustrated in the lives of three individuals.

The first of these individuals is Christ, and the unexpected aspect of selflessness Paul highlights in his life is that a selfless person goes down so that in time God can lift him up.

The Bibles of many theologians naturally open to Philippians 2:5-9, as they seek to understand the kenōsis or emptying of Christ whereby he "made himself nothing" (v. 7). But this ancient hymn (6-11) was cited by Paul not to spark abstract theological speculation, but to provide a practical pattern for all Christians to follow. Our attitude, says the apostle, should be that of Christ.

Simply stated, Christ started in the highest possible position ("equality with God") ${ }^{8}$ and descended to the lowest ("death on a cross"). He did not attempt to retain his lofty status, but let it go to become a servant for our good. We, says Paul, should do the same. The result of Christ's willingness to humble himself to the depths was that God exalted him to the heights. That selflessness should be the key to success and joy seems so counterintuitive, but Christ proves it true. A selfless person goes down so that in time God can lift him up. Or, as Christ himself taught, "[W]hoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." ${ }^{\text {P }}$

The second individual is Timothy, whose life shows that $a$ selfless person takes the number two spot so that in time he can enjoy the number one spot. Timothy assumed the number two spot in his relationship with the Philippians--he did not look out for his own interests, as everyone else was doing (20-21). He assumed second place in his relationship with Paul-he served as a son with his father (22). The result was that Timothy would be the one sent on this important mission to Philippi $(19,23)$. By serving willingly and genuinely as number two, Timothy became the number one man in Paul's eyes (20, "I have no one else like him"). Too many "leaders" throughout church history have insisted that their names and agendas be promoted above all else.

The third individual is Epaphroditus. In him we learn that a selfless person feels others' pain so that in time others will greet him with joy. Often when people become sick they become selfabsorbed. They want others to defer to and serve them because, after all, they do not feel well. If the attention they receive falls below their expectation, such people may grow angry and resentful. But notice the selflessness of this man. First, he had

[^28]nearly worn himself out in serving Paul. Second, when he became sick to the point of death, he became distressed because of the grief that others would experience over his illness. Here was a selfless man who felt others' pain-"I've been sick, and I'm so sorry for your sake!" The result was that Paul commanded the Philippians to "[w]elcome him in the Lord with great joy" (29). Thus by precept and by examples Philippians 2 teaches that the key to success in God's sight-and the joy which results-is selfless exertion for the good of others.

## Selflessness Means Looking Beyond Ourselves, 3:1-11

American author Nathaniel Hawthorne penned the short story "The Great Stone Face," in which a young boy spends his life contemplating a rock formation resembling a noble, kindly man's face, high in the neighboring mountain cliffs. A local legend predicts that someday a real man will appear whose visage and character mirror that lofty image. The lad is disappointed as various candidates fail to fulfill the prophecy. Then, one day the community recognizes that Ernest, who has now matured into a wise, kindly leader, bears the image of The Great Stone Face. Hawthorne thus confirms what psychology teaches-we become what we behold.

If that is true, then it would be wise for Christians to look at Christ rather than themselves. There are three ways we can do that.

First, we may fix our eyes on Christ by rejoicing in the Lord (3:1). This is God's general will for us. ${ }^{10}$ It is the believing course of action even when life is not going well. ${ }^{11}$ A self-centered person constantly contemplates himself-his well-being, his status, his recognition. A selfless person looks beyond himself and his immediate circumstances to Christ, and so by faith rejoices in the Lord.

[^29]Second, we may fix our eyes on Christ by rejecting those who rejoice in themselves (3:2-3). The NIV unfortunately misses the threefold repetition of "Watch out!" in 3:2.12 Those against whom the apostle thus so vigorously warns are religious people who stress circumcision rather than Christ-what they have done rather than what God has done for them. They rejoice in themselves. This is a serious error. Those who practice it are "dogs," ${ }^{13}$ "men who do evil," "mutilators of the flesh." The Bible focuses on Christ-"the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"-and so must we. We dare not focus on ourselves. No wonder Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord! And watch out for those who rejoice in themselves!"

Third, we should fix our eyes on Christ and forget our own attainments (3:4-11). There is nothing wrong with achievement, be it religious, moral, academic, social, or whatever. But there is a great deal wrong with confidence or boastful pride in achievement. Paul had achieved much of what was possible in the Judaism of his day (3:4-6). But was he confident in or proud of it? What did he consider these human credentials? They were loss; they were

[^30]rubbish. ${ }^{14}$ A self-centered person fondles and rehearses his pedigree and successes. The selfless Christian prefers to gaze at Christ.

Again, the reason to turn attention away from oneself is not because human success is pointless, but because what one gains in Christ is far greater. Paul anticipated at least these: 1) gain Christ, 2) be found in Christ, 3) have the righteousness found in Christ, 4) know Christ, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, 5) become like Christ, and 6) attain to the resurrection from the dead. ${ }^{15}$ Selflessness means looking beyond ourselves to Jesus Christ, in whom we find so much more. The result of such a selfless gaze is fruitfulness and joy.

## Selflessness Means Working for the Future Rather than Indulgence in the Present, 3:12-4:1

Selfishness is often short-sighted, mortgaging the future for immediate gratification. Tomorrow is uncertain; what we have is now. Therefore carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero; "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." By contrast, the opposite mindset entails sacrificing present gratification to build for the future. Paul urges Christians to live for the future, not the

[^31]past (3:12-16), and to live for the future, not the present (3:17-21). This is how we should stand firm (4:1).

First, we live for the future, not the past (3:12-16). In our mind's eye our greatest achievements should always lie ahead. By the time Paul wrote this letter he had already accomplished much in the Lord's work-founding churches, writing Scripture, healing the sick, confronting heresy, exorcising demons, training successors. Many people with this kind of résumé might think it time to retire and bask in their victories. But Paul has spelled out his life's goals ( $8 \mathrm{~b}-11$ ), and despite all he has done he has neither obtained his goals nor been made perfect (12). So one thing he does-forget the past and strain toward the future. And he calls on all who are mature to do the same.

How often God's people have failed to focus on the future and lived in the past. Lot had lived comfortably in Sodom, but God had new plans for him and the city. He had to be dragged by angels kicking and screaming from his comfortable past into the future. ${ }^{16}$ Israel in the wilderness wanted to return to slavery in Egypt rather than inherit the new Promised Land. ${ }^{17}$ The church prior to Acts 15 was in danger of turning back to the Law. ${ }^{18}$

In the same way, individuals and churches today sometimes loll in the past rather than march into the future. That is the easier path. The past is familiar-therefore comfortable and "safe." We can rehearse our successes and fear no more failures. But the past is dead and cannot change; life is in the future. Why seek the living among the dead? Of course, such a future orientation does not mean wie discard the lessons already learned (16).

Second, we live for the future, not the present (17-21). Many live for the moment-even professing Christians. But to do so is to live as the enemy of Christ's cross. The gods of these persons are their stomachs, that is, their present appetites. Their

[^32]minds are on present, earthly things. By contrast, true disciples live in the present with eyes on the future. Our citizenship is in heaven; we wait for a savior from there; our present body and its appetites is not what will last. We reject the course of Esau, who discarded his future inheritance rights for a single meal in the present. ${ }^{19}$ Rather, as Moses we choose to be mistreated with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time, because we look ahead to the reward. ${ }^{20}$ As Christ we eye the joy set before us and endure any present pain. ${ }^{21}$ Selflessness includes deferring present pleasures and focusing on our eternal future.

## Selflessness is Expressed in Practical Ways, 4:2-23

To this point the exposition of selflessness has been somewhat theoretical. Beginning with $4: 2$ the letter outlines some practical ways a selfless mind expresses itself.

First, selflessness means willingness to work with others (2-3). Good workers can sometimes divide over selfish issues. Both Euodia and Syntyche had "contended at [Paul's] side in the cause of the gospel." Now with warmth and evenhandedness ${ }^{22}$ Paul urges agreement and cooperation between the two. There are, of course, biblical grounds for separation from other professing Christians-godless doctrine ${ }^{23}$ and godless conduct. ${ }^{24}$ But personality differences, slight wrongs that have been suffered, ${ }^{25}$ slowness in advancing in Christian maturity, ${ }^{26}$ and membership in a

[^33]different clique or denomination ${ }^{27}$ are not among these. When animosity rises for wrong reasons, outside help is sometimes advisable to effect reconciliation (3).

Second, selflessness is expressed through focusing on the Lord (4-7). Paul revisits the theme of 3:1-3. Focus on the Lord means we will rejoice in him regardless of our circumstances (4). It means we will practice "gentleness," or, better, "restraint" ${ }^{28}$ toward others, because we know that the Lord who sees and will someday right all wrongs is near (5). ${ }^{29}$ Further, we will confidently pray rather than worry (6-7).

Third, selflessness is expressed through holy thinking and living (8-9). We will think holy thoughts (8) and live holy lives (9) rather than selfishly indulge in the immediate, temporary pleasures of $\sin$.

Fourth, selflessness is expressed through contentment (1014). The self-centered person constantly craves more. The selfless, with Paul, has "learned to be content whatever the circumstances." ${ }^{30}$ Instructively, the apostle knew how to "have plenty" as well as how to "be in need." Poverty is not in itself a virtue, as monks and their kin have supposed throughout the centuries. Boastful poverty is but a subtle way of taking pride in oneself.

Fifth, selflessness is expressed through giving and receiving (15-20). The Philippians' giving was obviously selfless,

[^34]but so was Paul's humbling himself to graciously receive, and to be glad for the good that would be credited to his donors' account.

## Conclusion

So ends one of the most uplifting New Testament epistles. Paul's gratitude and joy are evident throughout, and stem from his conscious decision not to focus his eyes or the eyes of others on himself. Rather he looks to the Lord and rejoices in him, and then considers others and how he may serve them. His selflessness proved the key to his joy, and he invites us to follow in his path.


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## Meet Christopher LaPel

UON Seila

Christopher LaPel

?hristopher LaPel was born to a well-educated city family. His father worked in the Royal Palace. The family had six children-two girls and four boys. Christopher was the smallest member of his family.

Q: During the Khmer Rough era, where did you go when you were evacuated from Phnom Penh?
A: So far as I remember we were evacuated from Phnom Penh April 17, 1975, to Kien Svay district, Koh Phos village, Kandal province. We stayed there for several months. We met some people whom we knew were working with the Khmer Rouge. Our family felt afraid of being killed, so one night we escaped from that village by motorboat to Kampong Chhnang. We stayed there one month. When we ran out of our food supplies we decided to move to Pursat province. There we faced further persecution and intimidation, so we escaped to Battambang by train. After one week in Svay Sisophon the Khmer Rouge evacuated us to Snoul, Preahnet Preah district region 5. We no longer lived together as family. The Khmer Rouge sent us to
different hard labor mobile groups according to our ages. We tried to hide our identities. When the Khmer Rouge questioned us we told them we were just simple peasants who lived in Koh Phos village, Kien Svay district and so on.

I asked him if his family were still alive when first he arrived in Snoul district. He replied, "My family survived for nearly one year. However, when the Khmer Rouge discovered that we were not farmers but city people they forced us to work at extremely hard labor. My father died in early 1976 because of this hard labor. They killed my sister in late 1976 and my mother around early 1977. My fifth brother was butchered only one month after the Vietnamese came into the country.
"During Chinese New Year in February 1979 I escaped from Cambodia to Thailand by foot and stayed in a Thai-Laotian village called Nong Ek (one of Thai villages along the Cambodia-Thailand border) near Aranyaprathet. I started a business selling medicine to the Cambodian refugees in Nong Chan Camp. When I went to visit Nong Chan Camp to look for my sister, brother, nieces, and nephews, I encountered some refugees who had malaria and dysentery. At first I only wanted to help them buy medicine. My intention was not to do business for riches. I was so happy that I could escape to live with Khmer-Thai-Laotian people. The people with whom I lived had been good to me. My business of bartering medicine for gold started to grow, but this business of smuggling things across the border was illegal. The business went up and down, and sometimes I was caught by Thai soldiers.
"The fear of being killed still buzzed around me. Sometimes I went to barter medicine with Cambodian refugees; other times I slept in.
"One day I saw a convoy of buses carrying Cambodian refugees from the camp along the border into Kao I Dang Camp. I missed my relatives while I lived in a safe place so I tried to go to Kao I Dang to trace any relatives who had survived the killing fields. In the Kao I Dang Camp (KID) I could not find anyone of my relatives, but I met one of my schoolmates. He urged me to
come and stay with him. I agreed and moved to his camp under the protection of UNHCR, and decided to quit my smuggling business.
"The first day I moved to stay in KID was the day I heard Good News through a missionary from the West. They told me about Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of God. He died on the cross for our sin. It stirred my excitement and reminded me of my childhood. I liked the cross very much. One of the sculptors in the royal palace had given me a cross made of ivory. I did not know what it was, but I only knew that I liked it and I wore on my neck all the time. I loved it very much. My father was not glad that I wore the cross. He called me a Catholic. During meals or in front of father I usually turned the cross back to behind my neck.
"I remembered once or twice in the Pol Pot time in Snoul I went to cut grass to make a thatch roof and I got a very high fever. As you know during the Pol Pot time if we were absent from work several days we were considered to be trying to escape from work:
"The Khmer Rouge cadres called and questioned me to make sure I was really sick. If not they would kill me. They asked, 'Are you really sick, or just too lazy to work?' I replied, 'I have had a fever for several days, comrades.' (This is a term we used in the Pol Pot time.) We knew that every time the Khmer Rouge summoned us, especially at night, it meant we would die. I felt many hands palpate me to check my temperature. Some felt my forehead; other hands groped my face. In the dark I could not tell whose hand was touching me. I only knew that one hand tore my shirt, touched my chest, and fondled the cross. Then a voice spoke: 'He is really sick. Let him go back, don't take him away (i.e., don't kill him). Provide him food and let him rest.'
"When I walked back to my resting place I wondered how this cross could have saved me from the hand of the Khmer Rouge. They sent me to a hospital. I was unconscious and I did not know where I lost the ivory cross. During that time I really did not know what the cross meant. When I was sick I was sent to Svay Sisophon Hospital, so I didn't know where 1 lost my cross.
"I wondered what the cross was. When I came to KID and heard the gospel story I realized immediately that Jesus is the

Savior. So I decided to follow Jesus right then. When I prayed to invite the Lord into my heart I completely changed. That is, by the power of the Holy Spirit my heart's hatred and revengeful desire to kill those who killed my family members completely left. At that moment the Holy Spirit filled my heart with love, joy, and peace, and took away all my fear. And I had a compassion for my compatriots. It made me want to serve my people. I especially wanted to share my experience with God with my friends and relatives."

Q: When did you go to the USA?
A: I stayed in KID about 6 months. I had been married for only one week. My wife is a Christian, too. There was someone working in the embassy looking for me. He told me that my name was chosen for resettlement in the USA. I could not believe my ears! My group was the first to leave KID for overseas. We departed in June 1980. At first we stayed in a transit camp in Chhun Bori for several weeks, then moved to Bangkok, and finally we stayed in Philippines for five months. While there we worshiped the Lord with our Christian brothers and sisters in Philippines.

We liked to serve the people because we knew English and we wanted to practice it by working with an international organization. Praise God I had the opportunity to work with the NGO "Christian Outreach" back in KID. We were trained to understand God's Word and grow into a good relationship with Him through our working with this Christian NGO. They moved us from one camp to another camp so we could learn different laws and customs.
Q: After you came to the United States, how much time elapsed before you began to serve the Lord?
A: I lived in the United States nine years before returning to serve the Lord in Cambodia in July 1989. My first service was with refugees in Site 2 and Site B. I planted two churches in Site B camp in 1991.

I requested UNBRO to repatriate about 150 families of our Christian brothers and sisters back into Cambodia in groups. They would go anywhere but wanted to settle in clusters. They agreed to my request, so they brought those people to Chamcar Samrong, Battambang. I came to Cambodia to serve as a church planter.
Q: What kind of church are you from?
A: My church is an independent church with no denomination. I like to be united with Christian regardless of denomination. But as for cults, I cannot be united with them.
Q: At the end of this interview let me ask what kind of request would you like to make? How do you want our Christian brothers and sisters to pray for you? And could you share a little bit about Duch?
A: I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our brothers and sisters in Christ. May you love one another as Christ loves us and commands us to love. Love for one another reflects the love of Jesus. Our brothers and sisters here are exceptionally special for me. I value highly their perseverance in their faith and service to the Lord. As a missionary from overseas I greatly appreciate you guys here allowing me to serve the Lord as your partner. Please receive me as a Cambodian! I have Khmer blood and was born as a Khmer in Khmer territory. Even though I live overseas I still deeply love Cambodia and wish all Khmers know Jesus and experience the truth and love of God in their hearts.

I am very happy to see we have unity, and I urge you to keep loving one another and serve God to win more souls among the Khmer!

When I met Duch the first time I did not realize that he was a former Khmer Rouge. He was an eager learner. He asked a lot of questions during a seminar. After several days of this seminar he decided to give his life to God and got baptized. His life completely changed. He came to his
village and led a number of his relatives to the Lord. He led a home church at his area.

He said he had no fear and he had to speak the truth. So it happened like this. I had no power to lead him to do that, but our God is powerful and merciful. He can change a man's heart completely.


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[^2]:    'Phil 2:8-9.

[^3]:    ${ }^{1}$ Gen 34:1; 1 Sam 18:25; Lev 27.

[^4]:    ${ }^{2}$ Stephen C. Barton, "Towards a Theology of the Family," Crucible Board for Social Responsibility (Jan-Mar 1993): 4-12.
    ${ }^{3}$ S. Pope, The Evolution of Altruism and the Ordering of Love (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1994).

[^5]:    ${ }^{4}$ Rom 8:15-17, Gal 3:26-4:6.
    ${ }^{5}$ Mark 10:28-31.
    ${ }^{6}$ Ronald Clapp, Families at the Crossroads: Beyond Traditional Roles and Modern Options (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1993).
    ${ }^{7}$ Luke 2:41-52.
    ${ }^{8}$ Mark 3:34-35.
    ${ }^{9}$ Matt 10:37.

[^6]:    ${ }^{10}$ Viva Network, "The Oxford Statement" (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, and Viva Network, Jan 6-10, 1997).
    "Chris J. W. Wright, God's People in God's Land (Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 1997), 239. See Deut 21:18-21; 21:16; 2 Ki 14:5-6.

[^7]:    ${ }^{12}$ Deut 6:4-9.
    ${ }^{13}$ Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:21.
    ${ }^{14}$ Don Browning, "Christian Ethics and the Family Debate: An Overview," virtual International Journal of Practical Theology: 1999 [www2.uchicago.edu/divinity/family/].
    ${ }^{15}$ Deut 10:18.

[^8]:    ${ }^{16}$ Ex 22:27.
    ${ }^{17}$ Jas 1:27.

[^9]:    A modified version of this article was presented to the United Pastors Fellowship Annual Retreat on 8 March 2001 at Kompong Som.

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[^11]:    (b) Stephen C. Barton, "Towards a Theology of the Family," Crucible Board for Social Responsibility (Jan-Mar 1993): 4-12.
    (m) S. Pope, The Evolution of Altruism and the Ordering of Love (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1994).

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[^13]:    (3) Ronald Clapp, Families at the Crossroads: Beyond Traditional Roles and Modern Options (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1993).
    
    
    

[^14]:    ${ }^{(90)}$ Viva Network, "The Oxford Statement" (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, and Viva Network, Jan 6-10, 1997).
    ${ }^{(99)}$ Chris J. W. Wright, God's People in God's Land (Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 1997), 239. See Deut 21:18-21; 21:16; 2 Ki 14:5-6.

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[^16]:    (96) Don Browning, "Christian Ethics and the Family Debate: An Overview," virtual International Journal of Practical Theology: 1999 [www2.uchicago.edu/divinity/family/].
    

[^17]:    '1 Chron 29:14.
    ${ }^{2}$ Robert Choy, Honeycomb vol. 1, no. 2 (October 2000): 47-67.

[^18]:    ${ }^{3}$ Rom 13:8.

[^19]:    ${ }^{4} 1$ John 2:15-17.
    ${ }^{5} 2 \operatorname{Tim}$ 2:4.

[^20]:    ${ }^{6}$ Prov 6:6-8.
    ${ }^{7}$ Luke 12:13-21.

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    ${ }^{(6)}$ Robert Choy，Honeycomb vol．1，no． 2 （October 2000）：47－67．

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[^25]:    '"Of all the themes that can be detected in Philippians, joy is the most obvious." Gerald F. Hawthorne, Philippians-Word Biblical Themes (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 107. See also Dwight Pentecost's The Joy of Living-A Study of Philippians and Chuck Swindoll's Laugh Again.
    ${ }^{2}$ See "joy" and "rejoice" in 1:4, 18bis, 25, 26; 2:2, 17, 18, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4bis, 10.

[^26]:    ${ }^{3}$ Acts 15:36.
    ${ }^{4}$ Acts 16:9.
    ${ }^{5}$ Acts 16:23-25, 27-28.

[^27]:    ${ }^{6}$ John 3:30-"He must become greater; I must become less."
    ${ }^{7} 2$ Cor 4:7; 1 Cor 3:5. Elsewhere Paul warned of church leaders who would "distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). See, by contrast, the attitude of Diotrephes in 3 John 9-10.

[^28]:    ${ }^{8}$ This accurately translates the phrase $\dot{\varepsilon} \nu \mu \circ \rho \phi \hat{\eta} \theta \varepsilon \circ \hat{v} \cup \pi \alpha \dot{\alpha} \chi \chi \omega v$. Mop $\phi \tilde{\eta}$ denotes an outward manifestation that accurately reflects something's inner essence, in contrast to $\sigma \chi \hat{\eta} \mu \alpha$, which refers to an outward appearance that may only be temporary. This is therefore a strong statement for the deity of Christ.
    ${ }^{9}$ Matt 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14.

[^29]:    ${ }^{10}$ E.g., Ps 100 and 1 Thess 5:16-18.
    "E.g., Hab 3:16-18.

[^30]:     $\beta \lambda \varepsilon \pi \varepsilon \tau \varepsilon \tau \eta \eta \nu \alpha \alpha \tau \alpha \tau \circ \mu \eta \nu$. This is a figure of speech called "anaphora," which repeats the same word at the beginning of successive clauses for emphasis.
    ${ }^{13}$ Among the Jews in biblical times the dog was "the most despicable, insolent and miserable of creatures" [TDNT, s.v. кv́ $\omega v$, кvvodplov]. It was a semi-wild scavenger fulfilling the function of the hyena, living on refuse. For Jezebel to be eaten by dogs was particularly humiliating for her. When David called himself a dead dog he was making himself as low as he could go. When Proverbs compares a fool returning to his folly to a dog returning to his vomit, Solomon is indicating just how base a fool can be. Pet owners often think of dogs as cute, cuddly, and friendly-and they can be. But in biblical times to call a person a dog was about as uncomplimentary as one could be. So it is not surprising that at the end of the Bible we find that outside the New Jerusalem are the dogs. That is what Paul thinks of these people.

[^31]:    ${ }^{14} \Sigma \kappa \chi ́ \beta \alpha \lambda \circ \nu$ means "dung, muck, excrement, fodder or food that has gone bad, etc." It is used to denote pitiful and horrible remains, such as a corpse half-eaten by fish [see TDNT, s.v. $\sigma \kappa v ́ \beta \alpha \lambda o v$ ]. Paul is thus very forceful in his devaluation of his own credentials in comparison with Christ. J. I. Packer trenchantly observes, "When Paul says he counts the things he lost 'dung', he means not merely that he does not think of them as having any value, but also that he does not live with them constantly in his mind: what normal person spends his time nostalgically dreaming of manure?" [Knowing God, 21.]
    ${ }^{15}$ This phrase does not mean Paul doubts either that there will be a resurrection or that he will share in it. Rather, he hopes by fixing his gaze on Christ to be empowered to live the resurrection life of Christ here on earth-to experience in his daily life what it means to have been raised with Christ.

[^32]:    ${ }^{16}$ Gen 19:12-20, 26.
    ${ }^{17}$ Num 11:5f, 18-20; 14:1-4; Acts 7:39.
    ${ }^{18}$ This was also the problem addressed in Galatians and Hebrews.

[^33]:    ${ }^{19}$ Gen 25:29-34; Heb 12:16.
    ${ }^{20} \mathrm{Heb}$ 11:24-26.
    ${ }^{21} \mathrm{Heb}$ 12:2.
    ${ }^{22}$ Using the same verb with each: "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche [Evoס́i $\alpha \nu \quad \pi \alpha \rho \alpha \kappa \alpha \lambda \omega$ к $\alpha i \quad \Sigma \nu \nu \tau ט \chi \eta \nu$ $\pi \alpha р \alpha \kappa \alpha \lambda \omega \bar{\omega}] . "$
    ${ }^{23}$ E.g., 2 John 7-11; Rom 16:17-18.
    ${ }^{24}$ E.g., 2 Thess 3:6; 1 Cor 5:9-11.
    ${ }^{25} \mathrm{Col} 3: 12-13$.
    ${ }^{26}$ Mark 8:1-21.

[^34]:    ${ }^{27}$ Mark 9:38-41; 1 Cor 1:10-13.
    ${ }^{28}$ The word $\varepsilon \pi l \varepsilon ı k \eta \zeta \rho$ and cognates "was used for a considerate, thoughtful attitude in legal relationships which was prepared to mitigate the rigours of justice, with its laws and claims, in contrast to the attitude which demands that rights, including one's own, should be upheld at all costs" [NIDNTT, 2:256-59, s.v. "Humility, Meekness"]. Its connection with the idea of selflessness should therefore be clear.
    ${ }^{29} \mathrm{C}$ p. James 5:1-9; 1 Cor 6:1-8.
    ${ }^{30}$ The NT speaks frequently of contentment despite poverty, e.g., Heb 10:32-34; 13:5; Luke 3:14; 9:58; 1 Tim 6:5-8. Nowhere does it urge believers to name and claim wealth as their right.

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