

February 2001 Newsletter

Dear ICC Family,

Life was never easy for six-year-old Gin Sok in Cambodia. The civil war had ravished the country, leaving the villagers struggling for survival. Then tragedy struck. Her father was killed in a mine bombing. The mother did her best to support her family, but a year later she died from food poisoning.

Gin Sok and her little brother went to the old grandfather's hut to live, but they were only a burden to the old man. "You have to go and beg so we can eat," he told her. The little girl, whose health was deteriorating, did her best, but she couldn't bring home enough to satisfy her grandfather, and he made her life miserable. Finally, he went off to another village, leaving the children behind. There was only an aunt left in the village, but she neither wanted the children nor was able to care for them. Gin Sok felt sad and hopeless, besides the old hunger that goes with malnutrition.

But God must have looked down and seen these little forlorn children of His. The aunt thought about the Adventist church school and took them there. The director looked at the children. The little girl was obviously sick, possibly even mentally retarded. She consulted with others on her staff and with the government authority, and was advised to take the children to the Cambodian International Children's Care facility. She knew that, without help, Gin Sok would likely be tricked into becoming a slave worker or be sold as a prostitute. When she, with her little brother, were taken to one of the ICC homes now functioning, it was like a dream. She became part of the family. There was plenty of food, but, most of all she was treated with love and kindness.

With the other children she began going to school. With the medical care she needed and nourishing food, her health improved. She is no longer the sickly, thin little waif with fear and hopelessness in her eyes, but a bright, happy little girl. Her progress report says that her health is good, she is a good student and progressing well. She especially likes history and art. Already she is learning English. The report says that she is an energetic girl with a great sense of humor, good-spirited, is happy and gets along well with the other children. She likes to help her house mother around the house. Playing sports, drawing, reading, and cooking are some of her favorite activities. She also likes to play soccer with the other girls.

Ra Ju is a three-year-old little boy who lost his father during the civil war. His mother is blind and has been paralyzed by a disease. Only the kindness of a neighbor, who shares some food with her, kept her and her little one alive. Her situation seemed hopeless. She was desperate to find a home for Ra Ju. When a missionary family told her about the ICC Cambodian country village for children, she hoped they would take her child and care for him. While she doesn't know how long she may live, she is happy knowing that her little boy has a permanent home and is well cared for. Ra Ju was sick and malnourished when he came to us, but good care, nutritious food, with love and kindness will make him a bright, happy boy.

Some of you may remember the story of a group of children in the northern part of Cambodia who escaped across the border during the last fight with the Pol Pot soldiers. They were taken through Thailand and back into the capital where ICC provided for their care in a rented house.

In the meantime, we were able to buy land in the country. The Adventist Mission agreed to cooperate with us to provide a mission school on adjoining property. The fifty acre parcel was divided between the two organizations. ICC has begun building our Children's Village there. We now have four homes finished, a duplex for teachers and a primary school building started. Children have come in faster than the houses could be finished, and they are in a crowded situation until more homes can be finished. They are conducting classes in the living rooms of the homes while building the school.

Unfortunately the mission has not found the funds to build the Mission Academy and is putting the land up for sale. This is of great concern to us, as we would have no control of such close neighbors. We are praying for funds to finish our building and also to buy the adjoining property. There are so many abandoned and orphaned children in this country that was ravaged by war for so many years. The local government is supportive of ICC Cambodia and realizes what a blessing it is for their children.

Ken and I are leaving tomorrow evening for Guatemala to attend the wedding of Salvador and Mayra. For those who read Child of the Crossfire, this is a different Mayra than his girlfriend in the book. We will tell you more about her later, and all about their wedding. He is now the pastor of a large district in northern Guatemala, near the Belize border. It consists of eight churches and nine groups.

There are many more children like Salvador with potential, talents that God can use, who just need the opportunity to develop and find their place in life. I hope to bring you more stories from our ICC children around the world, stories about children like Ra Ju and Gem Sok. Not only have they found homes, security, love and opportunities for education and development, but they are learning to know their Father in Heaven who must be looking forward to bringing them home to Him some day, where they will have "forever homes." Thank you for helping us make this possible. Our ICC family will receive the rewards when Jesus says "You did it unto the least of these, my children."

With our love and prayers,

Alcyon and Ken