a time to remember

God’s Goodness, Guidance, and Grace

The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Ps.96:3a
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, from all of us here at Phnom Penh Bible School. PPBS school began like a tiny mustard seed, planted in a very small compound in Khan Daun Penh, by a courageous man who loved Cambodia, Mr. Daniel Y. Lam. But God has gradually grown us into a large and tall tree. Now we are 20 years old on this day of March 16, 2012. As we reflect on the last 20 years we must give thanks to God for what He has done for our School. He has blessed us from a small beginning in that first little villa to a three story building tucked away in the congested area of Psa DeumKor, Khan Toul Kork, and finally to our own campus here in Phnom Penh Thmey. The last ten years have seen significant growth in a number of areas: in faculty size; a faculty development program; student population; higher level academic degrees; and a program of lay training through our Extension Education program (EE) which is conducted in provincial areas. The need for training continues to grow, often stretching our resources. Nevertheless, we thank God for entrusting us with this growing task.

We want to take this opportunity to express our thanks to our main supporter, Country Network USA-Aus, for tasking us with the vision of an interdenominational school to provide contextually relevant training for local Christians, who will become pastors and leaders, and for keeping us financially alive. We also thank God for our committed faculty members, and visiting teachers, present and past, who have often served long hours and some for years, and always worked cooperatively, to bring our task to practical reality. We also never want to forget to thank a faithful community of other supporters who have upheld our ministry of preparing Cambodians to reach out to bring their own people to Christ. Thank you for your faithful prayers and regular giving.

There is no doubt that God has been doing His wonderful work through the school to bless the Cambodian church. And it is the fruit of the hard work of His servants, that through the tiny mustard seed—PPBS—other seeds have been planted until now Christian shoots are all over Cambodia and even beyond. A harvest is also being reaped. Praise God for His goodness! The mission of PPBS has always been, and is still, to carry on forward to equip students to communicate and to live and work successfully in culturally diverse communities, from urban to rural. Through applied Biblical studies, linguistic achievement, and advancing educational methods, our students continue to effectively impact the church in Cambodia and beyond.

As principal of the Phnom Penh Bible School I would like to personally invite you to the celebration of our 20th Anniversary on March 16, 2012. Twenty years ago God began this ministry and by His grace and your interest, concern, support and prayers, we have now come to this milestone in the life of Phnom Penh Bible School. I sincerely, along with my Faculty and Staff, hope that you will join us. We want as many of our friends and supporters as possible to join us in this happy occasion to give thanks to God, and walk down memory lane with us, praising the goodness of our Lord! Having experienced the goodness of the Lord in the past helps us to trust Him for all that is to come.

Together for the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Timothy Ith
PPBS Principal
Remembering God’s Goodness
Over 20 Years

How can I describe God’s goodness or blessings to Phnom Penh Bible School? His goodness to PPBS is beyond my description. I can count the numbers of years that the Lord Jesus Christ has blessed PPBS. It is 20 years. I can recall many, many instances, myself, of God’s goodness, but that would not be all the ways He has blessed PPBS. I can recall important changes to the academic programs and the leadership and faculty of the school for its development, but still I cannot remember all his goodness to PPBS. However, allow me to recall a few good things which the Lord Jesus Christ has done through people that have been involved in leadership of PPBS.

Beginning and First Leaders of PPBS: After the Pol Pot regime ended, an international peace treaty was established with the occupying forces in Cambodia. Withdrawal brought the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) to our country in February 1992 to prepare for the first elections in 1993. The grace of God ran through Cambodia. Although there had been persecution of Christians and the Church was “underground” until then, public worship was also allowed in 1992. At that time, Mr. Daniel Lam, a Christian business man with a heart to advance the mission of the Church in Asia, seized the opportunity to open a Bible School to train Christian leaders. He, along with a group of Cambodian Christians, founded Phnom Penh Bible School in late 1992. He installed Mr. Setan Aaron Lee as Principal of PPBS.

Then in a tragic plane accident in 1994 the Lord Jesus took Mr. Lam to be with Him. In 1995, Mr. Sithan Ly resigned and Rev. Timothy Ith, the administrator, was appointed by the Board to be Principal. He retired in 2006, but remained as Honorary Principal. Dr. Andrew Kwong took up his position and remained Principal until 2009. Mr. Axel Rye Clausen was helping to lead for a short while after Dr. Kwong. In March, 2009 Rev. Ith was called out of retirement to lead the school again and has graciously and effectively done so until today.

The goal of PPBS and the Board has always been to have PPBS be led by Cambodians. Previously, Cambodians and foreigners sat on the Executive Committee of PPBS, but today, only one foreigner helps lead. However, by the coming academic year of 2012-13, the Ex-Com will most probably be made up of all Cambodians. If not, it will remain majority Khmer, and all of them will be graduates of PPBS who have returned with higher educational degrees to serve at PPBS.

So as I look back, I can see God’s goodness to us through the previous leaders who patiently trained Khmer students; helped them get higher theological educations; and have now handed over the leadership of the school to Khmer. It was the missiological intent of those former leaders, faculty members and the PPBS board that local leadership should be trained and prepared for the development, not only of PPBS, but the Cambodian Church. Cambodians are now taking up their responsibility to lead.

Program and Curriculum of PPBS: The program and curriculum have been designed to meet the needs of Cambodian Christians and are reviewed every year. Over the years the School has offered various types of certificates and diplomas. In 1992 PPBS began to offer a Diploma of Christian Ministry with three years of training. In 2005 the Extension Education program (EE) was instituted to meet the needs of the provincial areas for those who were not academically able to attend PPBS’ higher education programs or to leave their ministries to study full-time. The EE teachers (PPBS’ graduates) teach higher level courses in the different provinces, offering a Certificate in Biblical Studies. With God’s help and direction in 2006 PPBS began to offer a Bachelor of Christian Ministry to meet the needs of a developing Cambodian society, as many universities and colleges in Cambodia began to spring up, as well as more grass roots Bible Schools were emerging. Many Christians wanted higher and a more sufficient Bible and Ministry education. With the return of several of our graduates with Bachelor or Masters level education, received from Schools and Seminaries in South East Asia, we were able to upgrade our program to the Bachelor level requiring four years of training. Thus, presently, PPBS offers a Certificate in Foundation of Christian Ministries, a one year course; an Associates Degree in Christian Ministries, achievable...
in two years; as well as the EE Certificate.

Besides these degrees, PPBS offers many other educational opportunities for her students. English courses are now required and computer courses are offered. Optional music courses which have included learning various musical instruments, singing and other types of opportunities are held each year.

Now, we set our hearts, minds and eyes on the future as we are also seeking God’s help and direction for a Graduate Program, in His time, to equip Cambodian Christians to further meet the Biblical and educational requirements of our developing Cambodian society and a more educated Church populace (PPBS will become accredited by Asia Theological Association in the near future).

Campus of PPBS: The first campus was at Watkoh, about 600 meters from the King’s Palace, in a small villa. As enrolment and faculty grew during the first three years, there were not enough classrooms and offices to run the school. Three apartments were purchased in 1995, a few hundred meters from Olympic Stadium. There we progressed to three classrooms, more offices and rooms for girls to live in, but no open spaces for recreation or relaxing. But again, the Lord was good. He blessed PPBS with donors who bought the present property and with other help these beautiful buildings of classrooms, and dorms for men and women as well some faculty housing, were built. We moved into our present campus in 1999. But still our facilities were not complete. Again God provided generously to renovate part of the main office building into a library that now houses more than 6,000+ books with a computer lab. In 2007 the lovely student shelter and food canteen was built along with the present Worship Center. And then, just this past year, again God used his servants, to provide for the renovation of our Worship Center into an even more beautiful, air-conditioned, media and internet friendly Center for multi-purpose uses.

PPBS’ Graduates and Students: Though the leadership, the programs and curriculum, and the campus are important, and we like to mark the milestones, our most important blessings are our students. Our students are much involved in church planting and many churches have been planted by PPBS’ students or graduates. They are from different denominations and all parts of Cambodia. We praise and thank our Lord Jesus Christ that he has used PPBS to build and spread his Kingdom. We have sent almost 300 graduates to scores of different kinds of ministries throughout Cambodia. Several are “home missionaries” to non-ethnic Cambodian groups and one of our graduates has just taken up the call of being a “foreign missionary”, answering the call to a New Zealand church to reach out to a Khmer community there.

When I look back and recall God’s work through PPBS, my heart fills with joy. From a small villa to this very nice, large campus; to academic programs that are meeting needs of our progressing church and nation; to Khmer Faculty members who also serve the Christian community, God has grown His School! I was a student in that small villa and I am now a Faculty member of PPBS. Is this not a great bless-

All glory to God!

Tep Samnang
Academic Dean
The Bible is the supreme and primary source of all knowledge of God. This is the place to go if we want to know who God is, what his will is, and how he has revealed Himself to us. Moreover, the encounter with this book can mean more than just added knowledge; the Bible can change and renew our lives. In this holy book we find that God is described through different encounters with human beings, but since God is God and we are human beings, many times we are unable to reach concrete conclusions as to His being. We simply cannot fathom the depths of God. However, that being said, the Bible is clear when it comes to the most central description of God, namely that God is first and foremost love. It is stated directly so that no one should be in the dark about it. The Bible makes it clear that God is good.

Perhaps the greatest reflection of God’s goodness is the very fact that we have the Bible where He has made Himself known to us. The Bible is without parallel the best-selling book of all time. Estimates of exactly how many books have been sold, printed or distributed from the beginning of reproduction are uncertain, but one estimate of the number of Bibles printed between 1816 and 1992 is a staggering 6,000,000,000 copies in well over 2000 different languages and dialects! This in turn has created a priceless treasury of theological secondary literature, both in the strict sense of literature that pertains directly to the contents of specific books or themes of the Bible, and more loosely, literature that relates to biblical content in one form or the other.

As mentioned there is an invaluable treasury to be found here. However, the term ‘secondary literature’ sheds light on the nature of this literature: it is not the Bible. It is, in one way or the other, interpretation of the Bible, and since our interpretation is limited and fallible, we have to try every book by what we find in the Bible. This is no easy task, but it is a very important one. For different reasons people pass on their opinion on the Bible, and it is not always in order to strengthen the heart of the believer.

The array of biblical themes described in theological books is vast. The church has always insisted that since we are created by God, everything that relates to creation is relevant to our relationship with our fellow man and with our Creator. This is the reason why we can find theological books on almost any subject: youth, education, marriage, upbringing, church, prayer, faith, philosophy, war, politics, ethics, moral living, etc. Yet another reflection of God’s goodness is something that we particularly at PPBS encounter—the blessing of the many wonderful books at the Phnom Penh Bible School library. Our library offers the best opportunities in Cambodia for a comprehensive study of the word of God; this is something that we should take advantage of. And it is open to public membership.

I hope to see you all at the library so that we all can be reminded of God’s goodness!

Blessings!
Troels Toft
Head of PPBS Library
The True Life of Being a Servant of God

My name is Karng Sorphon, a former student of Phnom Penh Bible School. I received a diploma in Christian Ministry (DCM) in 2004. From that time God has called me to serve His ministry at Kom Pong Speu Province. Being a young pastor, single, gentle, and friendly to others - some people wanted me to marry their children even though I only had a bicycle for transportation. Many ladies wanted to see me because they heard that I was protected from evil spirits. Moreover, they wanted to ask me about the famous man that I am always proclaiming, Jesus Christ. Why am I talking about this? Because I was tempted by ladies, and I prayed to God; “O Lord I am not gentle, and I have nothing, so why do the ladies always come to me?”

I give thanks to God that he always protected and strengthened me to overcome that temptation. Philippians 4:13 “I can do everything through him who gives me strength”. Therefore, Jesus Christ, He is the true vine, my strength. I am just a branch from his vine, so I depend only on him for all things. If I will remain in Jesus, so Jesus will remain in me. I will never be cut off from him (John 15:5-7).

Through abiding, praying, reading God’s word, meditating, and obeying God, he has allowed me to serve Him. God is now allowing me to re-enter studies at Phnom Penh Bible School, for the degree of Bachelor of Christian Ministry (BCM). I enrolled in the academic year of 2011-2013 as a part-time student and God’s servant.

Finally, I encourage you all as servants of God to be filled with the love of Christ Jesus. God allows everyone to be tested differently. We should abide with Jesus and live with joy and hope, always giving thanks to God and others. Do not allow this world to tempt you away from God. We have to sacrifice our life to God and to please God, as life is short. It is the way to get blessings from God.

Greetings to my dear brothers and sisters in the Name of our Lord! Praise God that he gives vision and provision. I would like to express my deep thankfulness for the two year scholarship provided by both CMS Australia and SMBC. I am extremely glad that I have successfully finished the degree of Master of Arts in Theology and returned to the service of the Gospel in my country. I look forward to serving Jesus Christ with you all.

God bless you!

-Vuthy Son

Announcement from the Registrar's Office

Phnom Penh Bible School will open enrollment for the 2012-2013 academic year beginning the first week of March 2012. Curriculums in Bachelor of Christian Ministry (BCM), Associate Degree of Christian Ministry (ADCM) and Foundation of Christian Ministry (FCM) will be offered. Besides full-time study we also offer a day time part-time program for an Associate Degree of Christian Ministry (ADCM) and Foundation of Christian Ministry (FCM). Enrollment in our part-time courses would allow church leaders or any Christians to better prepare and equip themselves, even if they are not available to study full time. The deadline to apply is 30 August 2012.

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Should you need further information, please feel free to contact the Registrar’s Office by phone at 023 880 771 or 012 939 504 or visit our website: www.ppbs.edu.kh.
Teacher Recruitment

Phnom Penh Bible School (PPBS) is a four year Bible School that offers a one year Foundation in Christian Ministry Course; a two year Associate Degree and a four year Bachelor of Christian Ministries Degree. The School is located in Phnom Penh Thmey.

The Phnom Penh Bible School is presently recruiting full-time teachers, foreign and local Khmer, for the 2012-13 School year beginning in mid-September. Missionaries are most welcome. Interested candidates are requested to please send their CV (Resume) to Mr. Tep Samnang, Academic Dean at the following email address: academicdean@ppbs.edu.kh or call PPBS @ 012 939 504.

Teachers should have at least a Bachelor Degree in Bible, Theology or Christian Education, with a Masters level degree or in the process of achieving a Masters level degree. We are also seeking at least two full-time ESL teachers. English as the mother-tongue is preferred, but non-native speakers are welcome to apply.

Foreign teachers who are not exceptionally fluent in Khmer, teach through translation until they are fluently able. It should also be noted that it is the policy of PPBS that foreign teachers are volunteers, being responsible for their own financial support. Local Cambodians, if unable to support themselves, will be paid according to their qualifications and may possibly become eligible for further academic development through the Academic Development Program of PPBS.

All teachers must agree with and be willing to sign the PPBS Doctrinal Statement of Faith. Please find it on the School website: www.ppbs.edu.kh along with other information concerning the School. Please address any other inquiries to the Academic Dean at the email address above or to Phnom Penh Bible School, P.O. Box 1154, Phnom Penh.

The Ripened Field Purpose Statement

The Ripened Field PPBS Quarterly Newsletter exists for the purpose of conveying information related to the PPBS community so that the local Christian community and overseas Christian community can be informed about us and might respond in co-operation with PPBS in prayer and all means of support.
Ministry with Churches

Ministry with churches is one of the important works of Phnom Penh Bible School. All students are required to serve in a church or a Christian organization which is in agreement with the Field Ministry Department of Phnom Penh Bible School. If a student cannot fulfill this requirement the student cannot advance in academic study or receive a certificate.

The Field Ministry Department was created to give all Phnom Penh Bible School students an opportunity to apply their class lessons, improve their abilities, and gain experience in ministry service. Students do not only get knowledge from classes but they can also apply what they have learned to serve churches or Christian organizations. The experience and knowledge students receive from church ministry can help students to reach out and bring more people to Christ. Moreover, the Field Ministry Department was created to build and strengthen the relationship between the Phnom Penh Bible School and provincial churches to help each other in service to God. Phnom Penh Bible School needs churches and churches need Phnom Penh Bible School in making Jesus Christ’s Great Commission effective in Cambodia.

In the academic year 2010-11 the Field Ministry Department went to four provinces: Prey Veng, Kondal, Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Speu. In those provinces we met with local church leaders and encouraged one another by the Word of God and through the experiences each leader gained in serving God. We received a lot of positive and also some negative points. Most importantly, we learned about local church needs so that Phnom Penh Bible School can take an active part to help them grow.

For the academic year 2011-12 the Field Ministry Department plans to meet church leaders in provinces around Tonle Sap such as Pursat, Battambang, Bonteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Kompong Thom. We hope that our meeting with the local church leaders will be fruitful and that the partnership between our Phnom Penh Bible School and local churches will be strengthened. The meeting will allow both of us to share our experiences, and develop improved strategies to serve our Lord under His leadership.