

Mission

The power of a smile

by Backo Babic
Contributor

Pure souls, warm hearts, beautiful smiles, great hospitality, extraordinary humbleness, high humidity, brutal poverty, shameful inequality... just a few of many things our group has experienced in just less than two weeks we spent in Cambodia. The experience was life-changing and remarkable.

Our Mission Trip was a part of the unique class, Global Experience (REL 254), added to BC's curriculum for the first time this year. Throughout the semester we were meeting on Monday evenings and thoroughly studied the culture, civilization, and history of Cambodia, while eagerly waiting for March 17th when 6 students, two faculty members, and one community member went for a breathtaking journey.

everything that Cambodia had to offer. Strong heat waves welcomed us at Phnom Penh, the capital and home to more than 2 million people. The next day we had a chance to see what we've studied about. Visiting Tuolsleng Genocide Museum and Killing/Healing Field, places where more than 2 million people got killed during the Khmer Rouge regime around 30 years ago, helped us understand better what their people had to go through. Tour guys proudly and bravely talked about their history, unselfishly sharing several heartbreaking stories with us.

The next several days we've spent at the Bible College where we helped with pouring

them, but more importantly, we unkind and unfair the poverty



photo courtesy B. Babic

made the connections, as well. Leaving Bible College, exchanging phone numbers and e-mail addresses was quite emotional for many.

The last two days, including Easter Sunday, while in Phnom Penh, we spent with families and little kids from the dumb site and the orphanage. Everyone was amazed by their surviving skills, by very little resources they have, and finally by the level of their enthusiasm, hope, and contentment, everyone could wish for.

During our time at Phnom Penh, we also had a chance to visit Royal Palace where the king still remains, Russian Market, and many diverse restaurants.

The next day, we took a cruise to Siem Reap, the biggest tourist sport in Cambodia. Seeing the villages and other non-developed parts of the country on our way there, gave us a better perspective of how

can be.

Siem Reap is home of the biggest and the oldest Buddhist Temple in the World, built around 900 years ago. In the country where more than 95% of population are Buddhists, Angkor Wat Temple may be something Cambodians are the most proud of. It took around 40 years, more than 400,000 people, and more than 40,000 elephants while building the temple. Still "proudly standing," Angkor Wat is one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Unless one experiences it himself/herself, it is rather hard to explain and describe such a significant and a life-changing journey...a nation and people who have so little, but yet so much.

*For those of you who may be interested in seeing and hearing more about Cambodia, you may join us on April 21st at 7:00PM in Francis Pavilion (Porter Center).



The course is taught by Brevard College Chaplain Shelley Webb and assisted by Kelley Eyster.

After traveling for 30+ hours, we were all ready to experience

concrete and painting the gate. While attending their church services, eating meals with the students, and just spending a lot of time together, not only did we make a contact with some of

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