

Newsletter August, Missions conference and Cambodia!

Dear Mission Friend!

I hope you have had, and will continue to have, a wonderful summer—it's not over yet!

On August 19, we will be hosting a one-day business missions conference in Norrköping. Working with mission and business can take many forms, from moving to the mission field, supporting local entrepreneurial initiatives, running social enterprises on-site, to guiding governments in building a nation based on biblical values, and more.

In this month's newsletter, I want to share a report from Yngve Andreasson about his recent trip to Cambodia to explore the possibilities for developing FBS in the country. We introduced FBS in 2017 and expected to launch courses soon after. We only needed to translate the material, which we thought would take 3–4 months, but it has taken 6 years! Person after person has started and then dropped out for various reasons. But now we are ready and plan to start training this fall. Here is a brief report on his journey:

## **Cambodia**

After waiting for 6 years to return to Cambodia, it finally happened! When the flight ticket was booked, only one meeting was scheduled in Sisophon, but I hoped for more, while understanding that having the right meetings is more important than having many meetings.

The first meeting was with a few pastors and businesspeople in Sisophon. Andreas Jacobsson and his family are missionaries there, working with Pastor Piphup in a church. I felt the meeting went really well, and the pastors were interested in FBS. I conducted a small experiment with the participants. I asked everyone to write down how much debt they had and then submit it anonymously so I could tally it up. When I announced the total amount, they thought I was lying, so the interpreter had to start reading the various amounts before they understood how dire the situation was among a group of pastors and leaders. They realised that they themselves probably have better financial situations than many of their congregants.

Back in Phnom Penh, I met Sam Oll, one of the people I had met 6 years ago and with whom I had kept some contact over the years. His friend Bun Soeum joined us, and we spent about 2.5 days together—staying overnight on a papaya farm and also in a cabin village in the mountains. Sam Oll had previously been a pastor for 20 years but then transitioned to business. His friend has been a Bible teacher for 30 years but now works with Sam Oll. Both are still active in churches but not as leaders.

One evening, we sat on the veranda overlooking a 25-hectare papaya plantation. We began discussing how FBS could help churches in Cambodia. Sam Oll asked what FBS aims to do in Cambodia, and I kindly explained that we want to help Christians out of debt and poverty through the education they can receive from FBS.

Once I finished, Sam Oll began outlining what he believed was needed. First of all, he wanted a “revolution” to completely transform the financial situation of Christians. He then explained how we should proceed:

- Establish a board for FBS Cambodia to ensure the vision is followed and to support the national teachers.
- The board must find three national teachers who will be responsible for the administration and training of district teachers.
- Two teachers in each of the 25 districts who will be trained by the national teachers.
- Local teachers in the various churches who will be trained by the district teachers.

Sam Oll and Bun Soeum were willing to volunteer for the board but do not want to be teachers themselves; they prefer to be students who can later host other students for visits and show how to grow and earn money in Cambodia. They currently produce 10 tons of papaya a day. During our time together, we covered a lot that profoundly impacted my life and thoughts.

After a whirlwind of enlightening days with Sam Oll and Bun Soeum, I traveled to Siem Reap to meet Pastor Chhay, a friend of Piphup. He had gathered a few pastors and a couple of businesspeople who all spoke English. We had a really pleasant time together, several hours in fact. Several of the pastors were involved in business themselves and clearly saw the benefits of the FBS material. I stayed an extra couple of days to meet with some businesspeople before heading back to Phnom Penh.

On my way to the airport for my return flight, I had my final meeting with Ken Huff, who coordinates all Western missionaries in Cambodia. I had heard that Ken knows nearly all the pastors in the country after living there for 24 years. We had an hour-long lunch meeting, and it’s amazing how in such a short time, it felt like we had known each other forever. He clearly saw the need for FBS teaching in the country, and it will be exciting to see what this contact leads to in the future!

Wishing you a continued wonderful summer!





### **Prayer Requests:**

- Pray for our business missions conference on August 19.
- For upcoming trips to Cambodia, Thailand, Pakistan, and Africa this fall.
- For new collaborators.
- For anointing and grace over the work.
- For an expanding economy so we can hire more staff.

Marco Strömberg