Carbon dating indicates people inhabited Cambodia as early as 4000 B.C. Remains of ancient cities rest beneath its tropical forest. It is also home to Angor Wat, the world’s largest religious monument, built in the 12th century. Cambodia was part of French Indochina until it gained its independence in 1953. After suffering through communist Khmer Rouge forces, a decade of Vietnamese occupation, and almost 13 years of civil war, a constitutional monarchy was established and remains intact today. Located between Thailand and Vietnam in Southeast Asia, Cambodia has a tropical climate—which includes a six-month monsoon season.

One of the poorest countries in Asia, nearly half of the population works in agriculture, where they produce timber, rubber, rice, and tobacco. Others work in the garment, footwear, and tourism industries. However, Cambodia’s prospects are changing. Industry and tourism have combined to give Cambodia one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia. Almost everyone gets around by moped.

Nearly all 16 million Cambodians are Buddhist. Most of them lost their parents at a very young age due to genocide. Between 1975 and 1979, millions of Cambodians were murdered under the Khmer Rouge regime, led by dictator Pol Pot, and were buried in the notorious Killing Fields. This mass murder all but eliminated a generation. As a result, Cambodia’s population is extraordinarily young, with 90% of Cambodians younger than age 55. In fact, half the population is younger than 25.

Lutheran Hour Ministries conducts outreach in Cambodia through mass media, technology, and interpersonal channels.

**Ministry Response**

There is tremendous opportunity to share God’s love and reach out with the Gospel in Cambodia. Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM–Cambodia) responds to the spiritual hunger across the Asian country through a variety of strategies:

**RADIO.** Radio programming is one of LHM–Cambodia’s enduring ministries. An estimated 1.5 million people hear our weekly program, *Answer for Life*, live on two stations. Geared toward individuals ages 20 to 35, the broadcast addresses many of the obstacles they face in life and tells them about God, Jesus, and salvation. Listeners call in to ask questions. The program also invites listeners to contact the ministry office to receive free topical booklets.
FILM SHOWINGS. Most Cambodians are farmers and live in rural villages, which makes film showings a unique treat! Rooted in the Gospel, these film events provide a way for residents to gather together, discover who Jesus is, and get in touch with ministry staff.

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES. LHM–Cambodia offers Bible Correspondence Courses (BCCs) to introduce the Gospel to people who don’t know Jesus and reinforce a biblical understanding for people who do. When someone responds to an LHM outreach activity, LHM–Cambodia will typically invite the respondent to begin a BCC as the next step of his or her spiritual journey. BCCs are geared toward young students, young adults, and young married couples.

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS. LHM–Cambodia recruits volunteers and provides Equipping the Saints workshops that train volunteers in effective witnessing. We partner with local leaders to bring sessions on evangelism, hospitality, media, and other topics to their churches. After attending the sessions, believers feel more confident sharing the Gospel with their neighbors and inviting them to local congregations.

PERSONAL OUTREACH. Because most Cambodians have little education and live in poverty, they have limited knowledge on how to prevent sickness and other health issues, raise children, and foster peaceful relationships. Our volunteers visit people in their homes and hospitals to provide additional education where needed. They also offer Bible Correspondence Courses, which introduce people to their ultimate answer in life.

YOUTH MINISTRY. Working with pastors and principals, we bring puppet shows to young children in local schools. We make sure we bring a supply of story books so the kids can take the Good News with them, too! As children grow older, we coordinate soccer competitions, Bible study groups, music concerts, and other events. Pastors and other Christian leaders maintain relationships after the events conclude.

Impact

PEACE THAT SURPASSES UNDERSTANDING:
How God Used Lutheran Hour Ministries to Rescue a Cambodian Woman from a Generational Cycle

Mealea is 62 years old. She lives in the Cambodian village of Thmey, where she is a farmer. Like most Cambodians, her family had been Buddhist for generations. Mealea’s family members struggled with sickness for a long time, including one of her sons, who died as a result.

Buddhism is based on a system of good works, so when facing sickness, the family sought advice from fortune-tellers. The fortune-tellers told them they had displeased an ancestor’s spirit, who then sent the illness upon them. The purported solution was to sacrifice something—a chicken, a pig, a banana—to return the family to favor with the spirit. Yet the sickness remained, year after year. The experiences left Mealea in despair. Without resolution, she felt helpless.

She first heard about Jesus in 2010. However, because she didn’t understand the Good News or have faith in Him, she mocked the Christians she met ... but God had planted the Gospel’s seeds in her heart. Years later, Lutheran Hour Ministries held a film showing in Mealea’s village, which proclaimed the salvation available to everyone in Christ.

The Holy Spirit brought Mealea to faith in Jesus. Finally, she had answers. She had resolution. “That is why I turn to God, Jesus Christ, now,” Mealea says.

Mealea found a local congregation, where she continues to grow in her faith today. She attends Bible studies and prayer meetings. But best of all, she has the Savior’s peace that surpasses understanding.

LHM.ORG/GLOBAL