



Participants discuss the DNA of the early church during a two-day seminar I led with a local organization called Dove.

Answering the Big “How” Question

How do you best encourage and equip young leaders in the Cambodian church?

- Serve inside of a local church
- Teach in a Bible college/seminary
- Partner with a local NGO (nongovernment organization—think parachurch organizations such as World Vision)
- All of the above

I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about this big “how” question because the answer determines my ministry strategy. Over the last five years, I’ve answered it in different ways—and in many more nuanced ways than listed above.

When I came in 2014, I started with Option A by working under a Cambodian pastor in the discipleship ministries of New Life Fellowship. This was a fantastic place to learn for a few years, and my closest relationships in Cambodia are still with folks at New Life. However, I also knew that working there long-term probably wouldn’t be a good fit for me.

For the last couple of years, I explored Option B by anchoring myself at Phnom Penh Bible School and teaching Old Testament courses there. Again, I loved my students, learned tons, and got some excellent classroom experience. Yet, there was something missing for me too. Is a deep understanding of Deuteronomy really the critical need God is calling me to meet? Maybe not.

(continued on next page)

Prayer Points

Help!

- Pray for my work with Dove. You can pray for good relationships with the staff and a creative way forward as we develop new programs.
- Young Christian leaders are often overwhelmed as they face a rapidly changing context. Pray they find the support they need.
- I’m currently living with two Cambodian guys, and we are looking to add a couple more guys to our group. Pray that God would send us good candidates.
- My Resonate colleagues Gil and Joyce Suh are spending roughly the next year working in the US. Pray for them in this change and for me too as I continue here.

Thanks!

- My housemate Ponleu has received a clear diagnosis and has a treatment plan (see reverse).
- Phnom Penh Bible School completed its academic year in July, and many of my students made a lot of progress.
- I finished the fiscal year on June 30 with a surplus of about \$1,500! This was applied to program costs in Cambodia. Thank you too for your support!

“How” Question, continued

Now I’m shifting to Option C, partnering with a local organization called Dove. Dove is committed to “developing emerging leaders through healthy learning communities of trust where they can experience emotional healing, encouragement, and skills to navigate life maturely.”

Dove recognizes the pain that Cambodian young people have experienced, and through Dove’s programs, young people have opportunities to process and transform their pain. One of the key ways that Dove does this is through their Onyx program which meets every Saturday morning for ten months. It’s a big commitment, but the mostly college-aged participants are rewarded with engaging lessons and experiences on topics such as leadership, reconciliation, missional church, personal spiritual formation, and more.

Dove has been running the Onyx program for 5 or 6 years now, and there are 80+ alumni in Phnom Penh. Many are asking for something more, for “Onyx 2” or some kind of alumni engagement. My role is to come alongside Dove staff and help chart the course for what this might look like.

We are already off to a great start with about 25 alumni attending our monthly events. We’re beginning to dream about what a weekly program could look like starting in January, and I’m also actively involved in this year’s Onyx cohort as well. I’m really enjoying it so far.

My involvement with Dove is a big chunk of my workload (about 50%), and I’m also playing smaller roles in three other organizations as well as living with some local guys. These too are ways of answering the big “how” question.

There’s no magic answer to the question of leadership development in Cambodia. It requires careful consideration of one’s gifts/calling and the local context.

Option D, “All of the above,” allows room for many approaches—and importantly, for **actively partnering and networking** with churches, schools, organizations, businesses and others to encourage and equip leaders for the Cambodian church. Even as I dig in with Dove over the next year, I do it with an eye towards the big picture of the big question.



A training maxim I learned a few years ago is “No laughing, no learning.” One of the things that I really like about Dove is that they value interactive learning, also known as dialogue education, and all of their staff are trained in facilitation.



Solving Ponleu’s Medical Mystery

In my previous update, I shared about my housemate Ponleu’s medical mystery which landed him in the hospital for a week in June. Unfortunately, he had another episode in July and spent another week in the hospital.

Thankfully, this time he left the hospital with a clear diagnosis and a daily medication to manage his condition. We pray that with this treatment plan he will be able to avoid more time in ERs and ICUs and will grow and develop as a healthy teenager.

អរគុណច្រើន! / Thanks! – Justin

MAIL: Rev. Justin Van Zee, PO Box 164, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
EMAIL: jvanzee@crcna.org DONATE: resonateglobalmission.org/vanzee