URGENT PRAYER REQUEST FROM THE PWEITTS

I write with an urgent need for prayer! You have been following our stories because you care and because you long to be a part of what God’s doing out here among the Pnong. I ask you now to pray! I am stealing a few minutes to write you because we long for you join us right now on this trail in your prayers. As I write, my wife is upstairs feeling sick to her stomach. My kids are struggling with fits of tears. We feel an oppression of darkness! And that’s why I write!

A few years ago, as you may remember, I visited a faraway village, deep in the jungle to take rice and supplies to a young mother who had recently lost her husband to a snake bite. She had four young boys and few family members to help. Kaak and Chumpri accompanied me. I was eager to visit the village since I had heard the chief of the village wanted to become a worshiper of Chief God. He’d told a development worker that he was tired of worshiping the spirits – tired of their oppression – and anxious to learn of a God of love. And so we went. But the same night we returned, Chumpri had a horrible vision of an evil sorcerer appearing in front of him with a crossbow. The sorcerer shot him and he immediately became sick. The next morning I rushed to his home and prayed with him. He told me, “I recognized the sorcerer from the same village we visited by his actions. But he appeared to me as you. He looked exactly like you. I think he is jealous we took the supplies to the woman and gave nothing to him.” Chumpri was sick for 10 days and we believe he only recovered by the power of God. I knew then that Na-ang Village was indeed a village in darkness. Forces of evil were intent on keeping God’s light away.

Last week we visited Kaak and Chumpri in their field. While we were there, Kaak received a phone call from Na-ang Village, the same village we visited years ago. “Oincha’s house is burning to the ground,” Kaak exclaimed to us. “She’s the lady we gave rice to when her husband died. Her house is burning right now. No one will help her because now they think for sure the spirits are after her. Her husband was bitten by a snake and now her house? They are scared to help her – scared of what the spirits or sorcerers may do to them if they get involved.”

But there was more. Kaak and Chumpri told us that Ndruy, the chief’s son from Na-ang village, was staying at their house. “He’s terribly sick,” Chumpri explained. “He’s been sick for two weeks and really wants to go to his father’s wedding in three days. But we don’t think he should return back to his village while still so sick.” I felt the Lord tugging on my heart at that time. Oincha’s house burned to the ground. Ndruy, the chief’s son, was mysteriously sick and needing prayer. And the chief himself was getting married. I felt drawn to Na-ang Village. I’ve been thinking about it for years and longing to go back. “This is the time!” I thought to myself.

That same night I shared my feelings with Johanna. She affirmed me in my thinking and assured me that she would watch the boys alone and let me go. I could see the struggle in her own heart, for she too longed to go to this woman in need of help and a village bound in darkness. But she also knew the road to the village was extremely rugged and passed through the deepest jungles known to still be inhabited by wild elephants, wild buffalo, and even tigers. It was not the time to take the boys. “You must go!” she told me.

The next morning as I prayed, I had a vision. I saw what must have been an angel standing outside Na-ang village, inviting me in. “Is this my imagination,” I thought to myself. I shared it with Johanna later and she said, “Why do you keep questioning this? God is calling you there. Now go!”

I told the Greenfields about my call to go to Na-ang village later that morning and they immediately decided to support me on the trip. “Daniel should go with you,” Cara said immediately. “You guys need to get out there with supplies before it gets dark tonight. The woman slept on the ground last night with her four boys. They had no blankets, no mosquito nets, and no food. You must go!”
Daniel and I got out that there were white visitors and we found ourselves completely surrounded by curious onlookers. “I’ll be praying,” Daniel told me as he stepped to the side a bit. “I greeted several people closest to me and began answering their questions. ‘How did you learn our language?’ they asked with amusement and pride. ‘How long have you lived in our hills?’

By this time Johanna had most of the supplies ready and Daniel had assisted me by getting the oil changed in my Honda SL. Johanna and Daniel tied everything on while I played with the boys. I could tell Keenan was really struggling to let me go. “I don’t want you to be gone all night, Daddy,” he moaned with his little lips quivering. “I know,” I told him. “But a mommy and the boys would need. Do you think they’d like some of my cars?”

Nearly two hours after leaving home we finally made our way up the last hill and into the small village of Na-ang. Kaak had told me which hut to stop at. “My brother Nom is staying in Ndruy’s hut,” she’d told me. “Stop there and he’ll be glad to let you stay with them for the night. Tell him why you’ve come and ask him to accompany you to Oincha’s house with the supplies. It will be better that way!” I was glad for Kaak’s advice. She had also instructed us just what the widow and her children would need. We had with us 25 kilos of rice, five blankets, clothes for the boys, a jacket for the mother, three pans, five spoons, five bowls, five cups, soap, salt, MSG, a sponge, a scrub brush, and a number of other household items. The four little cars that Keenan sent were somewhere in a little ziplock bag.

At the hospital, I spent the next couple of hours helping him get checked in and to the right room. The doctors weren’t nice and once again I wondered if it was best to support such a corrupt health care system. Ndruy was scared to stay at the hospital. I explained that it was necessary to find out what disease he had. But then I continued, “Of course the most important thing is for you to look to Chief God for your healing. This may not come from a disease. Sometimes only Chief God can heal you.” I could see in his eyes hope and faith. Obviously Kaak has been telling him about her own faith in Chief God. He was thrilled when I spoke with Chief God and I could see him relax.

I knew our wives were right, but I hated to leave them. Since we’ve had the boys, I haven’t taken any overnight trips to the villages. But in this instance, I knew it was best. But while Daniel packed and Johanna rushed around the house grabbing supplies, I went back to Kaak’s to see Ndruy. I found the 22-year-old young man weak and pale, hot with a fever. I tested him negative for malaria with a small testing kit. But I still felt he should go to the hospital. He’d already seen a local doctor in the community who told him he had malaria. But these doctors often lie and seem to hand out drugs by the color instead of by what the patients need. I couldn’t see any malaria meds in little bags the doctor had given Ndruy. Thus I turned to him and said, “I think you should go to the hospital. I’ll take you in my truck.” He nodded his head in agreement and we were quickly on our way.

With those little cars tucked down in the supplies I waved at my family and we were off. By then it was four o’clock and I knew we had a two hour drive. “I hope the sun doesn’t really set at six,” I thought to myself. “I don’t want to be on that rough trail after dark with the jungle creatures.”

Daniel and I made good time on the first 25 kilometers. We were on the main, paved road back to Phnom Penh and 20 minutes after leaving home we were half way there – distance wise. I knew the next 25 kilometers wouldn’t be so easy.

We left the main road and made our way through several smaller villages on a dirt road. Then the road narrowed and we started our decent into the jungles. Soon the road seemed to disappear altogether and we were following a trial no wider than a footpath. Bamboo leaned in on both sides and the jungle seemed to close in over us as a ceiling. In places, the trail deteriorated into what appeared to be beds of rock – round, rolling rocks that tossed our bikes back and forth. We found it difficult to steady the bikes loaded so heavily. My eyes were always peeled for the slightest movement in the jungle and I wondered what might be watching us.

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Daniel and I found the house and parked the motorcycles just outside. A teen-age girl met us at the door. She was shocked to see us coming towards us, the woman who lost everything in the fire.”
I recognized her immediately from the previous visit several years before. This time she looked older but still very beautiful. She greeted me with such warmth that I wondered for sure if she truly had lost everything. But when I asked about the fire, her great loss suddenly drained her face of any joy. “My son was up in the loft trying to cook something,” she explained. “He left and went across the path to the neighbor’s house. That’s where we all were when we looked back and saw the smoke. We ran, but it was too late. We had gas in the house and it all quickly burst into flames. We couldn’t get anything out. My son had two friends visiting and both of their motorcycles were consumed. We lost all our clothes, all our pots and pans. And worse yet, we lost all 21 bags of rice from the rice field we’d worked so hard in this year.” I glanced over at the ashes and saw the pigs and chickens feasting on the roasted rice mixed throughout the smoldering rubbish. My heart sank.

“When Kaak told us about your situation,” I began, “My wife felt so terrible and wanted to send you some things. These are the things she prepared for you and the boys. I think you’ll find enough things to get started again. There are blankets and clothes and cooking utensils.” Oincha’s face lit up as she looked at our bikes, loaded with supplies. “Oh that makes me so happy!” she moaned with joy. “Please tell your wife thank you! I remember when you came before. Thanks for coming this time again. The villagers aren’t able to help me because I don’t have enough chickens to sacrifice and cleanse them with blood. Without those blood sacrifices, the villagers are afraid the sorcerers and spirits that are hurting us may hurt them too. That’s why they won’t let us sleep in their houses. So we appreciate your help so much.”

I smiled and simply said, “I’ve asked Chief God to be with you and I know that He will. He will chase away any evil spirit or sorcerer that is trying to harm you. He will stay in your home and will protect you. He loves people so much and he wants to help you. That’s why we’re here!”

Just then I turned and realized the chief was standing next to me. He greeted me warmly and asked about my visit. As I untied the supplies and set them on the ground, I told him about our mission to assist Oincha and about the morning I’d had with his son. “Please watch over him,” he told me. “I’m getting married soon and I can’t get there to see him. When you go back tomorrow, will you please check on him and make sure he’s alright?” I assured him I would and added, “I’ve also asked Chief God to be with him. We don’t know what disease he has, but we do know that Chief God has the power to help him.” The chief smiled warmly.

That night, back in Ndruy’s hut, I handed the first Bible Story book to his little sister, the same one who first greeted us. She was thrilled and said, “I’ve even learned to read the Pnong language. She and another girl spent the evening going through the book. And before bed I went through the first two chapters with Nom, who had never read the Pnong language. “It’s a little different from Khmer isn’t it?” I said pointing to one of the vowels not found in the Khmer alphabet. “Yeah,” he replied, “But with your help I think I’m catching on. I think I’ll be able to read this by myself now.”

I went to bed that night under a tiny mosquito net, on a hard mat, and under a single blanket with Daniel. I wondered how he was enjoying his first experience deep into the Pnong world. I fell asleep praying for the villagers.

The following day, after making our way back to the provincial center, I went to the hospital and found the doctors there hadn’t been able to find malaria either. In fact they hadn’t found anything wrong with Ndruy. “He has a cold,” they told me. Thus I prayed with him again and assured him that Chief God was not far away. He smiled warmly at me. By that afternoon he was on his way back to Na-ang village with a new series of medications Jane, the American nurse, suggested I try. “It’s the best we can do right now,” she told me. “But anyway we look at it, God is the only one who can heal Ndruy now. And it sounds like his dark village needs to see a little light from God.” I smiled at Jane’s words. She too knows the power struggle we are in.

So please pray for Ndruy. Pray that God will heal him and that Chief God will get all the credit. Please pray for Oincha and her four boys. Pray that God will protect them from the spirits of darkness and wicked sorcerers intent on destroying her. Pray for all the villagers in Na-ang Village that God will break through and deliver them from the oppressive bondage of darkness they have been subjected to for years. And please pray for the Greenfields and us as we seek God’s will in this situation. The battle is fierce. Yet I’m convinced that God wants to do something great and powerful in Na-ang Village.

We crave your prayers! Please join us!

Sincerely,

Braden, Johanna, Keenan, and Jaden