



Press Release

Released: 8th February, 2010

GyMEA Baptist opens new building – in Cambodia

Last Thursday, members of the GyMEA Baptist Church mission team, currently in Cambodia, attended the opening of a Child Safe Zone building funded entirely by the GyMEA church. Paul Summers, Pastor for Mission and Evangelism represented the church at the opening. The building is adjacent to an Internally Displaced People (IDP) camp at *Veals Pov* just out of Phnom Penh.

In May last year members of GyMEA Baptist Church raised \$64,000 to fund the project.

The building is a joint partnership between GyMEA Baptist, international aid and humanitarian agency Samaritan's Purse and a local Cambodian Church, on whose land the IDP camp and the Child Safe Zone have been built.

"The project will care for orphans and vulnerable children in Cambodia's growing IDP camps, where the poor are being sent as de-facto refugees in their own country," said Paul. "Due to economic hardship, parents who live in these camps are often forced to leave their children alone for up to 10 hours a day while they find work, even those five years old," he said. "This leaves them vulnerable to outside influences."

Country Director for Samaritan's Purse Jason Berry, who spoke at the opening, said that when they were considering where to build the Child Safe Zone, they looked for a community where the church was sustainable and had a prominent community role.

"We recognized that Child Safe Zone could really strengthen the churches witness. Pastor Soren and his wife at *Veals Pov* have a lot of credibility in the community and we felt that a Child Safe Zone would really help them in their ministry. The building will accommodate 65 children and the local church is providing teachers from 7am to 5pm six days a week," said Jason.

"We have told the local church here that whilst the building is a gift from GyMEA, it's their project. We're going to start you off, but you've got to run it. Ladies of the church have trained for 12 weeks developing the curriculum for the 88 families who live in the IDP camp immediately behind the Child Safe Zone. The building will also be used for church services," he said.

Speaking on behalf of GyMEA Baptist Church at the opening, Paul Summers spoke of

the project being a perfect example of the philosophy of Gymea Baptist Church. “As a church we seek to empower, love and engage with our community whether that community is local, national or international. Working with Samaritan’s Purse to build the Child Safe Zone in Cambodia is wonderful way of empowering the church here at *Veals Pov*, enabling them to be more effective in impacting their local community,” Paul said.

Images and video from the trip are on-line at:

www.cambodia2010.com

For more information: Martin Johnson – E-mail only whilst in Cambodia.

martin.johnson@bigpond.com

Karl Faase, Senior Pastor. (02) 9521 4611. karl.faase@gymeabaptist.org.au

Images: Paul Summers cuts the ribbon to formally open the new building (Pic: Martin Johnson)