

The Twelve Apostles in Cambodia



South-East Asia Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

A Warm Welcome

In November 2015, Chief Apostle Schneider invited all the Indian Apostles to be a part of his visit to Cambodia.

He was scheduled to conduct meetings in Cambodia for the South East Asian brothers from the 17th to the 23rd of November 2015.

The Chief Apostle was accompanied by District Apostle (DA) Andersen of Australia, DA Ehrich of Germany, DA Hebeisen of Philippines and DA Woll of Canada along with District Apostle Helpers David Devaraj from India as well as John Sobottka and Frank Dzur from Canada. Also invited for this visit were the Apostles from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand.



On 17th November 2015, a total of twelve Apostles from India landed in the city of Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. At the Phnom Penh airport, they were all pleasantly surprised as they received a very warm welcome from Apostle David, Bishop Voemun (from Canada) and a local team from Cambodia.

Bishop Voemun had been ordained a Priest in Alberta in 1989 and had left for Cambodia the same day to spread the Gospel. When he had first arrived there, the New Apostolic Church did not have any members in Cambodia. Today, there are about 200 congregations throughout the country of Cambodia.



On 18th and 19th November, Apostle David held meetings and individual sessions for the Indian Apostles. There were administrative discussions that focused on the effective reassignment of district rectors in each Apostle's working area as well as the reformation of administrative responsibilities.



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On Saturday the 21st November, our dear Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider provided all attendees with words of encouragement and spiritual motivation. The Apostles were also prompted to encourage the future generation of brothers and keep the work of the Lord moving forward.



After the spiritual part by the Chief Apostle, there were presentations on the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) from each Asian country representative. It gave every one present a real picture of the work and an insight into the strengths and difficulties that each of the countries have to face.

Everyone including our Chief Apostle was very impressed by the SWOT analysis presented by Apostle David from India. It was deep and very well prepared, giving a clear idea of the spiritual growth of The New Apostolic Church in India in last 45 years.



An Emotional and Thought Provoking Visit

On Friday, 20th November, the entire group made a visit to the Genocidal Memorials, the Killing Fields and old concentration camps. These horrific places have been turned into a museum to commemorate the forced evacuations of millions of victims who were tortured and killed during the darkest years of Cambodian History (1975 to 1979).





This impressed the souls of the Apostles deeply and they were reminded of the “dark side of humanity”, as one Apostle from China put it. Everybody was moved and touched in their hearts when they finally left the place and for many of the Apostles, this was a life time experience.





Expressing Gratitude for the Many Years of Service

On Saturday, 19th November, DA Mark Woll introduced the nine Apostles who would be retiring on Sunday: Apostles Sarin Nov and Kaom Meas from Cambodia, Apostles Mukhtar Masih and Anwar Khursheed from Pakistan, and Apostles Nilratna Arvind Gorde (Kolhapur – Maharashtra), Babu Ratnakumar Somala (Vijaywada – Andhra Pradesh), John Sunder Gorre (Hyderabad – Telangana), Vinod Masih (Banswara – Rajasthan) and Sangappa Manohar (Bidar – Karnataka).



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Our Chief Apostle specially thanked these Apostles for their dedication and special contributions that each of them had brought to the work of the Lord in their own special ways. All these Apostles had been pioneers of God’s work in their respective countries. They had sealed thousands of souls, opened hundreds of congregations, translated thousands of printed items into their local languages and travelled hundreds and thousands of kilometers to support God’s children and preach the Gospel of Christ.

Divine Service with Our Chief Apostle

The highlight was the festive Divine Service conducted by our dear Chief Apostle on Sunday, November 22nd in the Phnom Penh Central Church.



The Bible text for the service was taken from Acts 4:31, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness”.

Our Chief Apostle explained that God will give us the strength to do what we need to do. If we do His will we will be full of joy regardless of the circumstances. Be of one heart, mind and soul supporting the work of the Apostles and God will fulfill His promise.



Then came the time when the nine Apostles would be retired. There were really emotional and moving moments during the Service as the Chief Apostle spoke about the work done by these Apostles.

These moments were contrasted with the feelings of joy that was experienced during the ordination of the five new Apostles in the Divine Service. Five Bishops, two from Cambodia (Songseang Phat and Sophal Keo) and three from Pakistan (Sarwar Khariat, Babar Masih and Parus John) were called to give their “Yes” word to serve as Apostles in the future.



Taking Away Lifetime Experiences

The time we spent in Cambodia gave the Apostles many experiences and memories that will last for a life time. It enabled them to better understand both the history of the church in South East Asia as well as recognize the challenges and threats that the church is facing in these countries. Overall it was a blessed, trilling and emotional trip.



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