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Rev. Ban Ven
Cambodia Baptist Union
Phnom Penh, Cambodia



<i>Tribe or Ethnic Identity</i>	Cambodian
<i>Native Language</i>	Khmer
<i>Religion</i>	Christian – Baptist
<i>Education</i>	Regional Secondary High School in Takeo
<i>Work Position</i>	Pastor
<i>Date of Birth</i>	June 12, 1982

Work

Rev. Ban Ven is a pastor and farmer in a village of about five hundred, most of whom are farmers, solely dependant on tilling the land for their survival. As a Christian pastor in this predominately Buddhist country, he believes the best form of evangelism is through the example he sets with his own life. As a farmer he grows rice and raises cows, chickens, and fish. To reach out to the community he conducts a literacy program, teaching the Cambodian and English languages to children who cannot afford formal education. Sometimes he uses the money earned from selling his chickens and fish to purchase rice to give to people in the village who own no land.

Rev. Ven is from a big but very poor family. He couldn't start his schooling until the age of 14. "I struggled and experienced poverty in my family throughout my childhood for we never had enough food at home," he explains. In the end he had to quit school for lack of money, but after marriage he was able to go back and finish his secondary school with the help of his wife. Despite these difficulties, or perhaps because of them, Rev. Ven is deeply committed to his community work. "I love the people," he says, "and want to contribute in their struggle for survival." After his ARI training Rev. Ven has a vision to set up a model integrated organic farm to practice and teach sustainable agriculture in his village.

Sending Organization

The Cambodia Baptist Union is a legally registered Christian body that comprises about 200 churches in Cambodia. In addition to their evangelism work the organization coordinates several socio-economic and human development projects in order to improve the situation of the rural people. One example is the Home for the University Students project. The main goal of this project is to give students from rural areas access to universities, by providing them with living quarters, so that they can continue their education after high school. This is a long term investment which is meant to ensure a supply of skilled leaders for the future. Another project in 2008 was to provide 129 pastor families with 2 piglets each, which, despite a few difficulties along the way, turned out to be a huge success.