

Vision for Indochina by Jeff Romack

More than 50 years ago cell-based movements began efforts to transform three nations in Southeast Asia. After 30 years of dedicated effort these movements had grown to a point, in terms of numbers and influence, that they were able to assume control of the governments of these nations and begin to institute their plans for national transformation.

The nations were Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. The cell-based movement was the communist party. Today, Vietnam and Laos still remain in the grip of party control while Cambodia is now enjoying its first extended period of stability in more than thirty years.

Although the communist movement was able to seize the reins of power in these nations, by almost every measure they failed to bring about the transformation that they envisioned and promised. One nation, Cambodia, still struggles to come to terms with the genocide of the Pol Pot-Khmer Rouge regime. All three nations lag behind others in Southeast Asia in terms of religious freedom, education, healthcare and economic development.

What lessons can be learned from a grassroots, cell-based movement that took three entire nations captive to its vision?

1. It is important to have the right vision. They were visionary but their vision was not radical enough. It denied God and His claim on these nations and their peoples. Truth brings freedom while mere ideologies enslave. God's intention is to reconcile people to himself and bless these nations and he adds no trouble with it.
2. A relatively few dedicated people can change the course of a nation. Scripture tells us it is important to be zealous but for the right cause. Jesus taught that it is forceful men that lay hold of the Kingdom (Matt.11:12). God has a calling and a destiny for us.
3. Effective change must occur at the heart level of the individual. Ideas and values must be transformed if a nation is to be transformed. It is not enough to change the environment or infrastructure. Development that does not also bring about worldview change is, at best, relief.
4. Leadership from within, assistance from without. Without leadership from within the nation these movements would have never made significant progress towards their vision. At the same time, they needed the help of supporters



and resources from outside in order to help train and sustain momentum. This is true of our vision as well.

5. Don't despise small beginnings. Today in Cambodia YWAM and UofN are working to release a youth movement with biblical vision for the transformation of that nation and its peoples. Those who are interested in learning more or in participating in God's purposes in these nations can contact us at uofncambodia@bigpond.com.kh

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