

Christians Building a City From Scratch

Humanitarian organization People for Care & Learning (PCL) isn't just clothing and feeding widows and orphans; it's going one step further and building an entire city for them.

More than 8,000 people of the village Andong 3 in Cambodia were relocated in 2006 after the government needed the land for development. Each resident was given a small plot of land about 30 minutes outside of Phnom Penh, the capital.

After developing a good relationship with the Cambodian government, PCL was asked to work in the village, says Fred Garmon, international director and president of the Cleveland, Tenn.,-based nonprofit started by the Church of God.

"We built 100 homes, but it was still a slum," he says. So Garmon and others began to wonder if they could build the entire city. "The government really loved the idea," he recalls.

The \$ million-dollar project, which includes the construction of 1,500 family homes, is expected to be completed in 2015.

"We can make a difference in this city," says Garmon, who has witnessed firsthand the poverty, lack of clean water, devastating flooding that is so common to Andong, and lack of education and work opportunities.

"We serve to inspire hope and empower potential. To do that, we try to give the poor a working chance," Garmon adds. The goal is to create opportunities for people to learn important job skills.

Already throughout Cambodia, PCL operates orphanages, provides clean water, performs medical surgeries and offers English

classes. "One of the things that helps them move out of the poverty cycle ... is their ability to speak English," says Bill George, chairman of PCL's board of directors.

Currently there are 100 staff and volunteers working in Cambodia, including 10 in Andong 3. "If you're going to walk with the poor," George says, "you have to roll up your sleeves [and] earn the right to speak into their lives."