

Michael, Peter,

Bernie asked me to send this down to you guys. He is apparently disappointed he hasn't been contacted for the hospital story.

regards,
Chris

I am not concerned what the religious orientation of the folks who run the hospital is or who they hire to help them run this splendid hospital. Neither do I worry that the 243 children for whom I have found as many foster parents overseas, are being taught to be good Buddhists by a director, Phaly, who is a Buddhist and all of whose employees are Buddhists.

Nor does Mr. Toshu Fukami, the hospital's major donor, who is a Shinto priest and who heads a large group of Shinto believers in Japan. If I, who am not Christian and the major fund raiser and chairman of the hospital, don't care, why should anyone else? This is not tax payer's money, nor any government's funding. The private donors are the only ones who should have a say on such an issue and they do not take any issue.

The mission of the hospital staff is to help the needy whom no one else in the country treats without any charge, even drugs. Everything is free in this hospital. That is why it is so crowded with patients lining up from dawn and many have to wait. It's a reflection on the lack of such services in the country, not on the inability to provide efficient service, as another newspaper recently focused on. The expat doctors are paid just \$1,000 a month in salary, a fraction of what they were earning overseas, and they are doing a splendid job. Would its critics wish the hospital to cease functioning?

There are no religious artifacts in the hospital and no patients are proselytized to switch religions. In fact not a single painting is on the walls of the Sihanouk Hospital--Center of Hope to give any clue of any religious or political orientation of its staff. If the doctors who run the hospital feel more comfortable hiring people from their church, as I favor hiring some of the Cambodia Daily's support staff from among relatives of those recommend by our employees, (to ensure they will be honest and responsible to the person who introduced them), I support them. However, it actually is not true that they do not hire non-Christians. Many employees there are Buddhists. But regardless this policy, if it were the case and I am

not entirely sure it is, it would not bother me. The hospital staff are not civil servants nor paid from taxpayers or any governmental money from any country; they are funded by private donations and if the donors don't object why should anyone else? The purpose of the hospital is to provide high quality free care to the needy. Who they hire to do it, is the business of the people who support the hospital.

So I repeat: so what.

In my view, the folks running the hospital are saints. They are not motivated by money, in fact they've given up lucrative careers, luxurious homes and the safety they had back home to help the needy. And they also brought their wives and children along to Cambodia. Their religion motivates them to do the task so well. I count my blessings and do not object who they hire and why as long as the operation continues to be run as well as it is. The successful operation of this hospital supersedes my instincts about so-called equal employment rights in a city that is not so developed yet with such laws and such a system that it would work better.

Our donors fully support the right of the director of the hospital to determine who to hire because we feel comfortable the hospital is fulfilling its main mission: to provide good and free medical care to the indigent. I bless them for their humanitarianism and dedication. I have no problem with the religious orientation of this incredible staff, or even their desire to bring more people into their fold., even if it does not happen to be my religion or modus-operandi. It is unrelated, in my view, to the mission and execution of what we are trying to do here. I don't see why anyone would want to criticize an institution of this nature, funded by private funds which is achieving such remarkable humanitarian results.

Bernard Krisher,
Publisher
The Cambodia Daily